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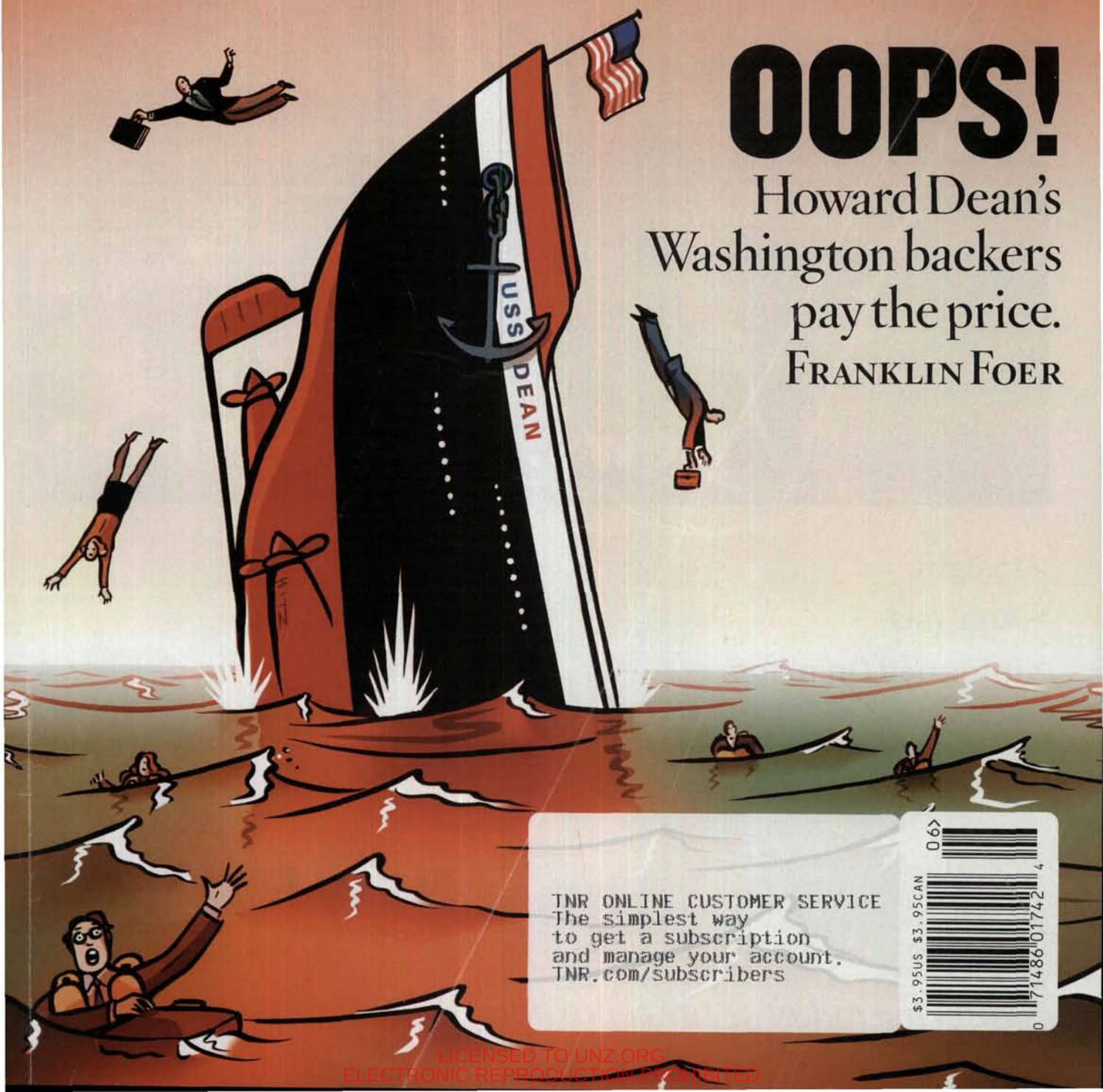

OOPS!

Howard Dean's Washington backers pay the price.

FRANKLIN FOER

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CORRESPONDENCE

DARK HORSE?

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S ENDORSEMENT of Joe Lieberman was a serious mistake, especially since the editors claim to have had national security in mind ("Our Choice," January 19). The Iraq war is the worst thing that could have happened from a national security point of view, because it took the heat off Al Qaeda (remember them?). Furthermore, by toppling a regime that was never a friend to Islamic extremists, it has created the biggest window of opportunity currently open to those extremists—including those associated with Al Qaeda. Consequently, the United States is arguably less safe now than when Saddam Hussein was in power.

I'm fed up with hearing Lieberman say of Howard Dean, Wesley Clark, and other opponents of the war in Iraq that, if they'd gotten their way, Saddam would still be in power; what's relevant here is that, if Lieberman hadn't gotten his way on the Iraq war, Osama bin Laden might be sitting in the cell currently occupied by Saddam. Now that would have made the United States safer.

STEVEN DANIEL
Brooklyn, New York

I JUST WANTED TO SAY THANK YOU for the amazing editorial on Lieberman. I've been floundering around for a few months, trying to decide who to support, even thinking to myself, "Could I actually be a Republican?" Then the TNR editors took the patchwork of political ideals in my head and presented them in a coherent way that made sense. This is U.S. media at its best. No sound bites. No simplifying of the issues. Instead, TNR provided thoughtful analysis in a succinct editorial.

JOSH SCHROEDER
Via the Internet

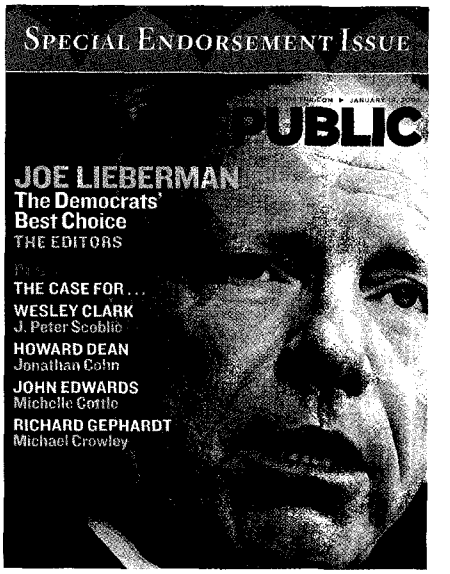
AS A LONGTIME READER, I MUST say that I am extremely disappointed in TNR's endorsement of Lieberman. TNR's choice can be directly traced back to a misguided belief that one must talk about God and religion to be president. TNR's article about Dean's "religion problem" is very illustrative of that (see Franklin Foer, "Beyond Belief," December 29). Dean has no religion problem; he is doing the right thing. As a Jew, I feel that Lieberman is very dangerous. When he mixes religion and politics, and supports vouchers and faith-based initiatives, he gives the worst elements of the religious right the perfect entrée: "See, it's Jews, too, and not just Christians. So that's nearly everybody!" How can TNR endorse an enemy of the separation of church and state?

MATTHEW ETTUS
Mountain View, California

AS A LONGTIME TNR READER, I'M greatly dismayed by the absence of any article advocating the candidacy of John Kerry. TNR seems to think that every other serious presidential candidate is worth advocating—with articles devoted to Wesley Clark, Howard Dean, John Edwards, and Richard Gephardt in addition to the Lieberman endorsement. I'm confused as to why TNR made this baffling omission of one of the leading contenders for the presidency.

BEN JACOBS
Baltimore, Maryland

I WANT TO CONGRATULATE TNR ON endorsing Lieberman for president. Lieberman's record speaks for itself: a self-styled moderate who doesn't let polls influence his decision-making. For years, the Democratic Party has gotten away from the policies of Bill Clinton with regards to domestic policy and let the Republicans take back the vital center and run the United States into the ground in the process. Lieberman is a consensus-maker and,



along with people like John McCain, will rescue us from the disasters of the current administration's cowboy diplomacy.

GARY SARTORI
Concord, New Hampshire

BY PUTTING LIEBERMAN ON THE ticket, instead of Senator Bob Graham, Al Gore cost himself the 2000 election. As the Democratic nominee, Lieberman would lead the Democratic Party to a bigger defeat than Dean. What the press has not picked up on is that Gore and Bill Bradley have used up whatever political capital they had. Their support for Dean is a liability, not an asset.

There are only two Democratic candidates who can beat Bush: John Kerry and Wesley Clark. If the Democratic ticket is Kerry-Clark, it's the strongest ticket the Democrats could field.

MICHAEL MAYNARD
Stow, Massachusetts

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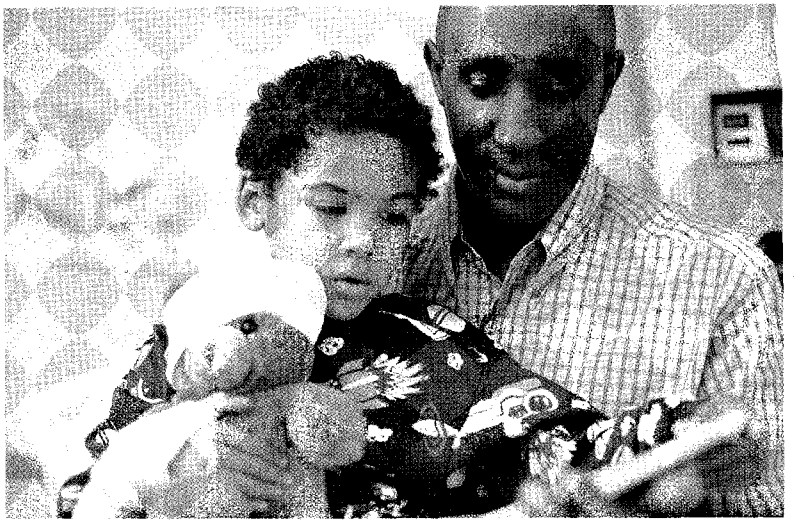
Where We Stand

THE **AFT** ON CRITICAL ISSUES

DOING WHAT WORKS



LEARNING WELL

State budget crises have wiped out health care coverage for 500,000 children from low-income families, and more cuts are looming.

Every day, all across the nation, millions of students come to school with health problems that make it difficult for them to learn. Many miss school repeatedly because of chronic conditions that could be treated, or even cured, with proper medical care. But they don't get it because their parents can't afford health insurance or pay for visits to the doctor. Asthma, for instance, is readily treatable, yet it's the leading cause of school absences—accounting for 14 million lost school days a year.

Kids who aren't insured are twice as likely as other children to go without the prescription medicine and eyeglasses they need, and three to four times as likely to have medical and dental care delayed.

It's just common sense—children with severe colds, upset stomachs, diabetes, and other ailments that go untreated can't do their best in school.

Medicaid—funded with federal and state dollars—has long provided health care for children from the very poorest families. But millions of other kids in families with incomes above the federal poverty threshold, who are too poor to buy insurance, are left without access to affordable health care.

FACTS:

- *Of the more than 9 million children in the United States who lack health care coverage, 5.8 million are currently eligible for either CHIP or Medicaid.*
- *Uninsured children are six times more likely than insured children to go without needed medical, dental, or other health care.*
- *Children with chronic health problems who miss more than 10 days in a 90-day semester are far more likely to repeat grades—at a hefty cost to taxpayers.*
- *U.S. public school students lose more than 51 million school hours annually because of dental health problems.*

Unprecedented Cuts

Congress took a big step toward solving that problem in 1997 when it created the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) as an incentive for states to provide coverage for children from poor families ineligible for Medicaid. CHIP now insures nearly 4 million children, but another 5.8 million eligible children still lack coverage.

What's worse, the number of uninsured children is growing again. A new report by the non-partisan Center on Budget and Policy Priorities says severe budget crises have prompted 34 states to make "unprecedented cuts" in health services for poor children and adults. Nearly 500,000 children have now lost publicly funded health care coverage, and more cuts are likely. Six states have stopped all new CHIP enrollments, regardless of children's need or eligibility.

We can't ignore the fact that, while CHIP—which is a virtual lifeline for millions of kids—is being slashed, wealthy Americans are getting huge tax breaks. That's unconscionable. We hope you will add your voice to the growing number of people demanding that Congress and the president help states restore funding for CHIP and other programs that keep our most vulnerable citizens healthy and ready to learn.

To learn more about education programs and resources that work, visit our Web site at www.aft.org.

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American Federation of Teachers
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Elect Few

TRB FROM WASHINGTON

In trouncing his Democratic rivals in state after state, John Kerry has taught the media several things. First, he responds well to adversity. Just as he did in his first Senate race in 1984 and in his reelection showdown against William Weld in 1996, Kerry got better as this year's campaign wore on. Unlike Al Gore, to whom he will often be compared, Kerry's gut political (if not always policy) instincts seem good. Faced last fall with chaos in his campaign, and ridicule from the pundits, he didn't try to reinvent himself—he simply became a sharper, tougher version of who he really is. That's hard. Just ask Howard Dean.

Much as he had when things got tough in 1984 and 1996, Kerry fell back on his service in Vietnam, using it more effectively than perhaps any presidential candidate ever has. Bob Dole never leveraged his World War II heroism into a compelling connection with voters in 1996. Bob Kerrey couldn't effectively use his Vietnam experience in the Democratic presidential primary in 1992, nor, famously, could Max Cleland in his Senate reelection bid in 2002. Even John McCain in 2000 used his POW experience only indirectly, as a metaphor for his courage in battling special interests. Past candidates struggled to speak about their deeply personal, often harrowing, experiences of war without sounding dark or self-serving. But, unlike past candidates, Kerry has been speaking publicly, indeed politically, about his Vietnam service since the moment he returned home. He does it naturally and convincingly, and it proved more effective on the stump than many observers—myself included—expected.

But, while we've learned some impressive things about Kerry over the last month, we haven't learned the lesson many commentators seem to think we have: that he's electable against George W. Bush. It's not that he isn't electable; we simply don't know. The media have come to believe we do on the basis of polls, in state after state, showing that Democratic voters consider Kerry the strongest general-election candidate. And that's a mistake, because those polls tell us virtually nothing at all.

Asked on Election Day which Democrat was most capable of beating Bush, more than 50 percent of New Hampshire primary voters said Kerry. A mere 14 percent said Dean. Most pundits looked at those numbers and felt emboldened. After all, they had been saying for months that Kerry's national security experience would make him a stronger general-election candidate than the angry, antiwar former Vermont governor. And they assumed that, when New Hampshire voters rated the two men's electability, they had the same factors in mind.

But they probably didn't. After all, only a few weeks earlier, in December, 47 percent of likely voters had said *Dean* was the most electable Democrat against Bush, versus only 15 percent for Kerry. Little had happened between December and January to make Dean more dovish or Kerry more experienced. (And New Hampshire's highly informed voters were well-aware of the two candidates' profiles late last year.) Which is why, among pundits, perceptions of electability remained relatively constant. But, among New Hampshire voters, they swung dramatically almost overnight for a simple reason: Dean started losing, and Kerry started winning. Contrary to what many journalists assumed, Dean's low electability numbers weren't the cause of his slide in the polls; they were the result.

Political scientists have long tracked what they call the "bandwagon" effect in presidential primaries. Voters move toward the candidate who has done best in the preceding states. That's why Kerry's support in New Hampshire rose instantly after he won Iowa and why his support in the February 3 states rose instantly after he won New Hampshire, even though he had not campaigned, or advertised, in those states in months.

Perceptions of electability also rise and fall in response to primary victories and losses. Dean was viewed as the most electable candidate by roughly one in five voters in Iowa, by only one in ten voters in New Hampshire, and, after he lost both those states, by less than one in 20 in Oklahoma and South Carolina. In South Carolina, voters were twice as likely to name Kerry as the most electable candidate as they were to name John Edwards. In Virginia, 58 percent of voters said Kerry was "very likely" to beat Bush, compared with only 19 percent for Edwards. Would a careful comparison of the electoral advantages of Edwards's Southern charm versus Kerry's battle-tested experience produce such a lopsided result? It didn't among commentators. But voters probably weren't making that comparison. They were responding to Kerry's past victories and his frontrunner status.

In other words, when voters say a candidate is most electable in the general election, what they often mean is that he's most electable *in the primary*. In 1989, an Emory University political scientist named Alan Abramowitz measured perceptions of electability in the 1988 Democratic and Republican presidential primaries. His article, in the November 1989 issue of *The Journal of Politics*, concluded that "students of the nominating process may find it somewhat disturbing that primary voters base their evaluation of a candidate's electability almost exclusively on his performance in earlier primaries and caucuses."

But, this year, students of the nominating process in the media have not found it disturbing at all, because they have barely considered that voters may deem Kerry the most electable candidate merely because he has, in the primaries, proved the most successful. Instead, they have assumed that voters consider Kerry electable for the same reason they do: his national security experience. And, seeing their views ratified by the public, they have grown more and more confident in asserting them.

Maybe Kerry really is the most electable Democrat. Maybe his Vietnam record will help more against Bush than Edwards's Carolina twang or Wesley Clark's four stars. It's a perfectly reasonable discussion for pundits to have. As long as they don't assume voters are discussing the same thing.

PETER BEINART

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Open Wide

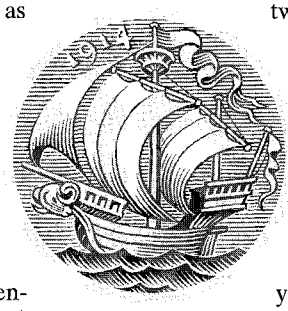
IN HIS RECENT sit-down with Tim Russert on NBC's "Meet The Press," President Bush aimed to set the record straight about Democrats' criticism of his Vietnam-era service in the Texas Air National Guard. "I wouldn't denigrate service to the Guard," the president shot back, "because there are a lot of really fine people who served in the National Guard and who are serving in the National Guard today in Iraq."

Absolutely true. Also, absolutely irrelevant. The current controversy is not about whether "a lot of really fine people" fulfilled their Guard duties proudly and patriotically. It is about whether George W. Bush was one of them.

The initial facts of Bush's military service are not in contention: He graduated from Yale in 1968, at the height of the Vietnam War. With the help of a family friend—who contacted then–Texas Speaker Ben Barnes on his behalf—Bush received a coveted post in the Texas Air National Guard. The first couple of years of Bush's training seem to have gone without incident. In 1972, when offered a job with an Alabama Senate campaign, Bush requested permission to fulfill his drilling obligations with a mail squadron based in Montgomery. That permission was ultimately denied, but Bush joined the campaign anyway. That August, he failed to show up for his annual physical and, as a result, was stripped of his flight status. The following month, Bush received permission to perform his fall service duty with the 187th Tactical Recon Group in Montgomery.

Here's where things get cloudy: No one can locate any evidence that Bush turned up for duty in Montgomery. As *The Boston Globe* first reported during the 2000 campaign, Bush's discharge papers show no record of service in Alabama. Moreover, the commander of the 187th, William Turnipseed, specifically told the *Globe*, "Had he reported in, I would have had some recall, and I do not." For his part, Bush insists he did show up for duty in Alabama, though he offers no proof.

There is conflicting evidence regarding Bush's Guard attendance following the 1972 election as well. At that point, Bush was supposed to return to Ellington Air Force Base in Houston. But, in May 1973, Bush's commanding officers were unable to write his annual performance evaluation because, as far as they could tell, there had been no performance to evaluate. Bush's official record reads, "Lt. Bush has not been observed at this unit during the period of report" (May 1, 1972, through April 30, 1973). Far from a minor offense, such delinquency meant (in theory, at least) that Bush could be called up to serve in Vietnam.



The confusion surrounding Bush's service exists for one reason: He has refused to publicly release his full military records. Russert pressed him on exactly this question, asking, "But you authorize release of everything to settle this?" The president replied, "Yeah, absolutely." But, over the next few days, the White House quickly retreated from that position. On Tuesday, it released payroll records purporting to show that Bush had fulfilled his duties, and, by the next day, spokesman Scott McClellan was telling reporters that this was all the president had ever agreed to do, explaining, "No, I think the question was payroll records, payroll records that would show you served."

But that wasn't the question, and the records released by the White House provide few answers. Yes, they seem to show that Bush was paid for National Guard duty on several dates in late 1972 and early 1973. But what that duty was and where it took place remain a mystery. As the *Globe*—which continues to outclass its competitors on this story—points out, there is a discrepancy between the late 1972 dates when Bush was ordered to drill with the Montgomery unit (October 7–8 and November 4–5) and the dates for which he was paid (October 28–29 and November 11–14). Moreover, the payroll records fail to shed any light on Bush's apparent six-month hiatus from duty between April and October 1972, including his failure to show up for his August physical. Nor do they explain why his official discharge papers contain no record of his performing Guard duty of any kind after May 1972—almost a year and a half before his October 1973 discharge.

Such questions remain because Bush—his promise to Russert notwithstanding—still refuses to allow full access to his military records. Those records can almost certainly either corroborate or refute his version of events. By continuing to keep them secret, he is offering a strong indication of which it is. ■

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NOTEBOOK

Dean Reverses Himself . . . Conservatives Reverse History

COVER STORY

ONE THING YOU CAN SAY FOR Howard Dean, even as he spirals toward political oblivion: The man is a straight-talker. So much so that he can't even conceal when he's lying to his supporters. Last week, Dean sent a mass e-mail declaring he would make a do-or-die stand in the February 17 Wisconsin primary. "The entire race has come down to this: We must win Wisconsin," Dean wrote. "Anything less will put us out of the race." With this Sherman-esque statement, of course, came a plea for more money. The implication was that Deaniacs should comb their couches for loose change, because this was their last chance. And they responded, donating nearly twice the $700,000 he'd asked them for.

From the beginning, there was something fishy about Dean's desperate appeal, which vaguely echoed televangelist Oral Roberts's famous warning that God would "call me home" if his flock didn't pony up. Dean reinforced this suspicion the day after the appeal, when he bragged to reporters that it had been "a brilliant ploy." Asked what he meant, Dean said, "It depends what your definition of the word 'ploy' is." Dean insisted he simply meant "strategy"; the American Heritage dictionary defines "ploy" as "[a]n action calculated to . . . gain an advantage indirectly or deviously."

And the dictionary definition is exactly what Dean revealed his do-or-die statement to be this week when he announced that he'd stay in the race no matter what—Wisconsin be damned. Worse, to justify his decision, Dean invoked the same followers he'd just tricked. Much as he used his supporters as cover when he opted out of the campaign finance system last fall—pointing to their ratification of the decision in an online referendum after he told them it "may be the only way to win this election"—Dean said he would stay in the race out of deference to them.

Howard Dean

"[H]ow am I going to resist all the people who are tugging at my sleeve . . . saying, 'Don't quit'?" he asked.

Of course, Dean is ignoring all the people who want him *out of* the race—like the Democratic voters in 14 states who have yet to produce one victory for Dean; or the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, which this week withdrew its endorsement of his candidacy; or even some of the Dean bloggers, who are asking why their man is going back on his word. "I gave additional money to the campaign on the assumption that [Wisconsin] was the last great stand. All or nothing," one posted on the Dean for America blog. "What's going on?" The answer is all too clear.

MILITARY RECORD

WITH JOHN KERRY MAKING HIS service in Vietnam a staple of his campaign, it's hardly surprising that Republicans are making Kerry's subsequent antiwar activities a staple of their attacks on him. And the first salvo, it seems, is to deliberately misconstrue Kerry's 1971 testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

It was in that testimony that Kerry, representing the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), uttered the now-famous question: "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?" But Republicans and their allies in the press have lately been paying more attention to another part of Kerry's testimony. As *National Review* put it on the cover of their February 23 issue, plugging a story called "THE SENATOR'S OTHER VIETNAM WAR RECORD," Kerry testified that day, "American soldiers 'raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, . . . cut off limbs, . . . randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in a fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside . . .' " A January 30 article in the *The Washington Times* reported that Kerry testified, "They . . . raped, cut off ears, cut off heads," etc.

The quote, as rendered on the *National Review* cover and in the *Times* article, makes it appear that Kerry himself was, as the *Times* put it, committing "slander of the GIs he left behind in Vietnam." But that's only because *National Review* and the *Times* use their own language or ellipses to omit critical elements of Kerry's testimony. Months before Kerry's appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, VVAW had held what it called the "Winter Soldier Investigation" in Detroit, at which more than 100 Vietnam veterans testified to war crimes they themselves committed while serving in Vietnam. Those are the crimes to which Kerry referred in his Senate testimony, as a fuller version of his remarks—which, to *National Review*'s limited credit, it did print in its actual article—makes clear. Speaking of the veterans who testified at the "Winter Soldier Investigation," Kerry

DAVID COWLES

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said, "They told stories that at times they had personally raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in a fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam in addition to the normal ravage of war." So, far from making the allegations himself, Kerry was simply repeating what other veterans themselves had admitted. Too bad for *National Review* and the *Times* that none of them are running for president.

TAX AND SPEND

IN 2001, AFTER THE FIRST MAJOR TAX cut of the Bush administration, the IRS sent out letters to taxpayers reading, in part, "We are pleased to inform you that the United States Congress passed—and President George W. Bush signed into law—the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001, which provides long-term tax relief for all Americans who pay income taxes. The new tax law provides immediate tax relief in 2001 and long-term tax relief for the years to come." The Bush administration's use of the government to distribute propaganda—the language in the letter echoed Bush's talking points—outraged staffers at the IRS.

But it turns out that the administration was just getting started. Recently, you may have seen TV ads reassuring voters, er, seniors, about the new Medicare prescription-drug benefit. With the theme "Same Medicare. More Benefits," the ads are not very different from what a GOP ad would look like, and they amount to a $9.5 million taxpayer grant to Bush's reelection campaign. Indeed, the firm that produced the ads, National Media Inc., is working for the Bush campaign. So, it seems, are large chunks of the government. ■

TNR.commentary

&c.

NOAM SCHEIBER

KERRY GETS TO PICK HIS POISON: *The Washington Post* reports that John Kerry is considering—or at least refusing to rule out—supporting an amendment to the Massachusetts constitution outlawing gay marriage. According to basic political logic, this shouldn't be a tough call. The Republicans have made no secret of their plans to attack Kerry as a Massachusetts liberal during this fall's campaign; he isn't likely to be helped by the fact that the Democratic National Convention will take place in Boston—at a time when gay men and women may be flocking to the state to take advantage of its recent supreme court ruling on gay marriage.

The problem for Kerry is that the character flaw that has most dogged him over the course of his career is his tendency to take whichever side of an issue he deems most politically expedient. Worse, the one counterexample Kerry supporters tend to point to when confronted with this rap is Kerry's courageous opposition to the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996, which he derided as politically motivated "gay-bashing."

For a lot of other Democrats, the gay marriage decision might be seen as a rare deviation from a record of either relative moderation (if they decided to oppose an amendment banning it) or relative principle (if they decided to support it). For Kerry, the gay marriage issue puts his two biggest weaknesses in direct conflict with one another—whichever way he decides to go, his decision risks crystallizing a major character flaw in a way that's likely to define him for the duration of the campaign. The question for the Kerry camp, I guess, is whether he'd rather be defined as a hopeless liberal or a hopeless panderer. Not a choice I'd want to make.

IRAQ'D

SPENCER ACKERMAN

RUSSERT GETS IRAQ'D: There are only so many follow-up questions a journalist can ask in a one-hour interview. Aware of his time restrictions, Tim Russert decided to ask President Bush as few of them as possible during the Oval Office edition of NBC's "Meet the Press."

In the interview, Bush demonstrated a breathtaking ignorance about both the very visible facts on the ground in Iraq and the too-likely consequences of the policies he has pursued there. Basing his understanding on what he has been told by "the leaders from Iraq"—that is, those Iraqis he installed on a powerless Iraqi Governing Council—Bush said that Iraqis are "thrilled with the activities that we've taken." Sure, there is "nervousness" about the future, Bush said, but that's "because they're not exactly sure what their form of government will look like."

But it wasn't "nervousness" that brought tens of thousands of Shia Iraqis out into the streets last month in protest. It was a total lack of confidence in Bush's November 15 agreement, which announced that the United States will turn over power on June 30 to a new interim legislature convened through a complex system of selections, with the United States and its chosen Iraqis largely controlling eligibility.

"These people are committed to a pluralistic society," Bush told Russert, and there are indeed Iraqis committed to pluralism. The problem is that Bush's policies are marginalizing them. Or worse. Not only have moderates been weakened politically by the November 15 agreement, the inability of the United States to provide security has led to the assassinations in Baghdad of hundreds of Iraqi intellectuals and civil servants—the backbone of Iraqi civil society, which itself would be the backbone of a potential democracy.

Bush proclaims himself confident about the future of Iraq because of "this basic law they're writing." That basic law indeed appears to be a rather liberal document, guaranteeing fundamental freedoms to the Iraqi people. But Bush is doing precisely nothing to ensure its viability. The basic law has been, not surprisingly, a subject of contention among its drafters on the Governing Council. But the real danger is that Iraqis outside the Council will reject it: Already, Grand Ayatollah Ali Al Sistani, the only significant post-Saddam Hussein Iraqi leader to have arisen organically has said that any basic law needs to receive a mandate from directly elected representatives through a popular vote to be legitimate.

Russert challenged not a single one of Bush's ridiculous contentions about the future of democracy in Iraq. To be fair, the NBC newsman is hardly the only journalist to allow Bush a pass on his November 15 agreement. But this would have been a follow-up question worth pursuing: Mr. President, you told Russert that "the best way to secure America for the long term is to promote freedom and a free society [in Iraq] and to encourage democracy." What does it mean for U.S. security if your policies in Iraq fail to do so?

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Campaign Journal

Going South

BY RYAN LIZZA

FEBRUARY 9, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

IT'S NEVER A good sign when a candidate starts talking about his campaign in the past tense. It's Monday afternoon, the day before the Tennessee and Virginia primaries, and General Wesley Clark has his shoes kicked off and his feet up on a leather sofa in the back of his campaign bus. We're rolling through western Tennessee, close to the Arkansas border, on our way from Ripley (population 7,800), where Clark talked to about 35 people, to Memphis, where he will address fewer than a hundred. In addition to the sparse crowds, money is drying up and the polls are looking grim.

Clark tells me he has no regrets about his long-shot campaign for president, "I certainly ran the race with every intent"—he pauses abruptly, realizing he's slipped into the past tense—"I'm still running with every intent of becoming president. But, regardless of that, I'm happy to contribute to the public dialogue. ... You do what you can in life, and you hope things work out the right way."

As we talk, one of the embedded journalists from the TV networks who follows Clark everywhere records our interview on camera. Clark says he has finally figured out that she only films him now in case he dies suddenly. "She's taking those pictures to see if I'm going to have a heart attack while I'm talking to you," he jokes. "It's nothing that I'm saying that's particularly interesting. She's heard it all a dozen times. She just wants to see if I go, ohhhh, ahhhh—" Clark holds his hands to his chest, stiffens his body, and lets out a sound that recalls Howard Dean on election night in Iowa. "Then she'll have something," he continues. "One day, she was trying to take a picture of me, and I slipped getting on an airplane. They had a conniption fit out there looking at me slipping, getting on an airplane. 'Oh, did we get it all?'"

I ask him what the low point of the campaign was, and he insists he can't think of any. But, a few minutes later, I witness it. Up in the front of the bus, Clark is standing near the bathroom door. He turns to the embed, smiling. "Did you want to turn off that camera so I can go in here?" he asks. She answers, "Can I come?" Clark's staff breaks up laughing. Someone teases the embed that she is known to like the handsome John Edwards more than Clark anyway. Clark stands in front of the bathroom shaking his head and smiling. "She asked me to go into the bathroom with her. And I'm only her second choice! ... It's the lowest moment of the campaign."

This article was adapted from entries in Ryan Lizza's online CAMPAIGN JOURNAL, *updated daily at* TNR.COM.

After a sparsely attended midday event at B.B. King's Blues Club on Beale Street in Memphis, I sit down with Clark and his staff across the street at Blues City Café, a spot made famous by several visits from Bill Clinton. They order big plates of barbeque ribs. Sitting in between Clark and me is Eli Segal, a former Clinton official who, as Clark's campaign chairman, helped give the campaign its early reputation as a refuge for ex-Clintonites trying to recapture the lightning-in-a-bottle success of 1992. Segal says he just talked to one of the campaign's fund-raisers. "He's still raising money," he tells Clark optimistically. "He is?" Clark answers quietly, a touch of surprise in his voice.

Back on the press bus at the end of the day, Clark's aides are cheerily fatalistic. "I'm going to miss you guys," says Ian Alberg, the deputy communications director, when reporters give him a hard time about some logistical issue. Even one of Clark's bus drivers thinks the end is near. As we pull away from Clark's final Tennessee rally before voters head to the polls the following day, the driver sighs. "I'm sure glad it's almost over," he says.

AFTERNOON, FEBRUARY 10, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

IT'S ALMOST NOON on primary day, and the general is visiting Noshville, a New York deli in midtown Nashville—excellent knishes—to see if he can scare up some last-minute votes. It isn't going well. One man, Marty Heslin, confronts Clark over his refusal to condemn Michael Moore's comment about Bush being a National Guard "deserter." "You said you didn't know all the facts," Heslin complains. Clark doesn't back down: "I don't have all the facts," he tells Heslin. "But you know what all the facts are. These charges have been around for a long time. And they're coming up again. And let me tell you something, if there weren't anything to this charge, George Bush would have opened [his records] up."

A few minutes later, Clark is in the back of the restaurant speaking about the war in Iraq to nine older women in a small private room. When I join them, the general is forcefully explaining to one woman, "There are no terrorists in Iraq, ma'am." She doesn't seem persuaded. "You can shake your head, ma'am, but you should listen to me, because I was a four-star general." Clark begins a long disquisition about Middle East policy, jumping from why the Bushes will never get tough with Saudi Arabia ("They have had dealings with the Saudi royal family for years and years and years") to the demographics of Iraq ("Shiites are about sixty to seventy percent of the population. ... In the North, there are the Kurds"). The women stare at him. Clark pulls his Blackberry from his belt. "I got an e-mail from a guy today who is a Washington insider," he tells them. According to the guy, Iraq was just the first war in a string of coming Bush conflicts to transform the region. A woman in the back of the room stands up. "General Clark," she says softly, politely, "this is actually a gardening meeting."

After Clark thanks them and an aide whisks him out of the room to get lunch, the candidate's wife, Gert, walks in.

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"You poor women," she says. She talks to them about growing daffodils and notes that Arkansas has the same climate as Tennessee.

The Noshville visit ends with the photo-op every losing campaign must dread. Dennis Kucinich, who happens to be meeting supporters next door at J & J's Market and Café, drops by to shake hands with Clark. As the two candidates smile and backslap for the cameras, a Kucinich supporter shouts, "What about a Kucinich-Clark ticket?" Yesterday's low point has been eclipsed.

Later in the afternoon, though, as Clark rolls from Nashville to Memphis for his election night party, the press bus is awash in rumors. Reporters are trying to track down the new issue of *The National Enquirer*, which supposedly contains a juicy John Kerry exposé. The tabloid has given hope to a few Clarkies that they could fight on and wait for Kerry to collapse. It's a slim reed to hang a candidacy on, but, for some in the campaign, it seems it might be enough. One journalist who checks in with Clark's press secretary reports that the team is definitely going to Wisconsin tomorrow.

EVENING, FEBRUARY 10, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

AROUND 5 P.M., our buses pass Graceland, make a right, and stop a mile down the road at Lanier Middle School, a polling place where a small group of sign-waving Clark fans greets the general and his wife. When he gets off the bus, a local TV reporter asks if Tennessee will be the decisive state. He smiles and says, "It might be."

As voters straggle into Lanier, Clark catches them in the parking lot, one after another, and greets them cheerfully. "Hi, I'm Wes Clark," he says. "I'm running for president, and I'd sure like to have you vote for me." He betrays no hint of bitterness at the depths to which his candidacy has fallen since he jumped into the campaign last September as the leader in the national polls and was proclaimed by *Newsweek* the new front-runner. "This is the most fun part of it," he says when asked whether he likes shaking hands with strangers in the middle of nowhere. "I love talking to people. It's just a thrill." At 6 p.m. local time, an hour before the polls close here, the networks call Virginia, where Clark comes in a distant third.

Three hours later, the Tennessee returns are still too close to call—at least for second and third place, where there seems to be a chance Clark could edge out Edwards, as he did to win Oklahoma a week ago. Some in the general's inner circle are convinced he might yet stay in the race. A few reporters joke grimly that, if he doesn't drop out, it will mess up the end-of-the-road stories they came to Tennessee to write. A little after 9 p.m., Clark delivers a cryptic concession speech that fails to clarify whether he's in or out: "Our goal remains the same," he tells a small crowd, "to change the direction of our country and bring a higher standard of leadership to the White House."

The press gaggle is livid. How can they write their stories? At about 9:30 p.m., more than a dozen print and broadcast reporters troop upstairs to room 1803 (the "Danny Thomas" suite) to demand some information. A semi-frightened staffer opens the door and tells the motley crew of cameramen and scribes that she has no information for us. She then sneaks out of the suite through another door. Suddenly, a bald man in a black shirt opens a door across the hall. He turns out to be a reporter, too. He says he overheard some Clark aides in the hallway whispering that the decision has already been made for Clark to exit. Not exactly the confirmation the pack was looking for. Finally, the campaign schedules a press conference for 11:15 p.m. to make an announcement about Clark's future, and we go to the filing center to wait. But, before the announcement even takes place, a television tuned to CNN flashes the news: The Associated Press is reporting that Wesley Clark has abandoned his campaign for president. A few minutes later, campaign spokesman Matt Bennett appears and delivers a formal announcement. "It's a very simple statement," he says. "General Clark has decided to leave the race."

Why did the Clark campaign fail? There are a few reasons. Clark started the race not as a candidate but as a concept cooked up in Washington by Democrats terrified at the prospect of nominating Howard Dean. Clark's resumé—four-star general, Southerner, antiwar, etc.—was ideal, but his performance on the stump less than awe-inspiring. It turned out that his successes on the battlefield bore no correlation to how he would do in a campaign. "This was Michael Jordan playing baseball," says Democratic strategist Kenny Baer.

According to campaign officials, Bennett and a few other senior staffers came to truly believe in Clark. But, in many cases, the campaign represented a weird bargain between former Clinton staffers eager to find a way back into the White House and a retired general with a decent-sized ego who saw a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be president. "They saw this as their only path back to the White House," says a Clark aide speaking of some of the Clintonites. It's not just the ex-Clinton officials who some staffers criticize as mercenaries. "If you asked [campaign manager] Paul Johnson why should Wesley Clark be president," says an aide, "he couldn't tell you."

But the biggest problem is that Clark entered the race when Kerry was collapsing and Dean was peaking. "This was set up as an anti-Dean campaign," says one person close to the campaign. Once Kerry came back, the entire premise of Clark's candidacy disappeared. Asks Bennett, "What the hell were we going to do?" ■

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London Dispatch

Swan Dive

BY OLIVER BURKEMAN

BRITAIN'S BEST-SELLING CONSERVATIVE daily tabloid newspaper, *The Sun*, may be known internationally as the one President Bush chose to speak to in advance of his recent visit to London. But *The Sun* story that hit U.K. newsstands one day late last year was easily as sensational as the Bush scoop. The paper claimed that Eastern European migrants, entering Britain to seek political asylum, were stealing the swans that famously populate London's parks, then killing and barbecuing them. Worse, they were stealing them from the queen, who, by a quirk of British law, personally owns every swan in the nation. The headline, in two-inch-high capital letters, was a characteristic *Sun* pun: "SWAN BAKE."

The tale was too surreal to be true, and the paper later retracted it. But, every day for months now, articles in Britain's conservative press have leveled far graver charges against would-be refugees, calling them welfare parasites, health service freeloaders, burglars, rapists, murderers, and terrorists. Britain is in the grip of a full-fledged panic: In polls, a perceived tide of asylum-seekers regularly competes with Iraq, education, and health care as the issue troubling Britons the most. Meanwhile, the extreme right British National Party is enjoying a resurgence in local politics, largely thanks to rhetoric portraying political migrants as imposters looking not for safety but for welfare.

As in most panics, the facts here hardly justify the fear. Yet the clamor has panicked Tony Blair's government, which is hurriedly pushing through legislation that is rendering Britain's asylum system even more draconian, consigning hundreds of people to near-prison conditions and threatening to leave many more with little option but to return to the countries that originally persecuted them.

ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN the United Kingdom are essentially invisible—not least because they are forbidden from working while the authorities decide whether or not to let them remain, a process that can take months. (Migrants who enter illegally stay even further from the public eye, with tragic exceptions, such as the 58 Chinese nationals found dead in a truck at Dover four years ago.) But, on the bustling streets of places like Wembley Park, an ethnically diverse neighborhood in northwest London, you can see them: families, many of Somali or Kurdish origin, often with small children in tow. They are visible enough to have become targets of violence: In the north of England, an Iraqi asylum-seeker recently was apparently deliberately run over by a car; while, in Scotland, gangs armed with knives and broken bottles have injured several political migrants and killed one. "A lot of the residents here were just terrified of the asylum-seekers, for whatever irrational reason," a community activist told reporters at the murder trial. Of course, part of that "irrational reason" is the press.

Predictably, anti-refugee voices in the media reject responsibility for the incendiary atmosphere. Newspapers reflect the public mood rather than create it, say journalists at the *Daily Mail*, a middlebrow tabloid that has helped lead the campaign with headlines like "A DOOR WE CAN'T CLOSE." But it isn't hard to impute a causal connection—one rendered all the more distasteful given the *Mail*'s history on the topic. In 1938, alongside loud hurrahs for Britain's fascist leader Oswald Mosley, the newspaper opined, "The way stateless Jews from Germany are pouring in from every port in the country is becoming an outrage." In many tabloids, there is a "relentless repetition of hostile epithets and a hugely disproportionate number of photos of asylum-seekers looking threatening," says Kirsteen Tait, director of a unit at King's College London that monitors asylum coverage. "In our studies, people say they don't believe the worst type of inaccurate and imbalanced reporting. But their later comments show they've been influenced." Worse, in the last few weeks, a new scare has taken hold. With ten more states joining the European Union in May, some newspapers claim that 100,000 Gypsies from new EU members Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia could soon arrive in Britain seeking benefits and health care.

Perception, though, is far out of sync with reality. One recent poll showed that, on average, Britons think the United Kingdom accepts 23 percent of the world's refugees. In part, this may be because of the government's "dispersal scheme," which moves asylum-seekers out of central London and concentrates them in a few neighborhoods, meaning migrants sometimes do represent up to one-third of the residents of individual housing estates. Yet, overall, the United Kingdom accepts less than 2 percent of the world's refugees. Eleven thousand nine hundred fifty-five refugee applications were made in the third quarter of 2003; only a fraction were allowed to stay. Those who refuse to leave when told to do so are a genuine problem, but that tendency has been exaggerated. "It's the countries that are desperately poor that are taking literally millions of refugees," says Maeve Sherlock, chief executive of the Refugee Council, Britain's leading asylum charity. Indeed, in 2003, Iran took in the most in the world, and, over the last decade, the developing world has shouldered 72 percent of the refugee burden.

Britain is routinely described as a "soft touch" for economic migrants posing as political refugees. But that claim doesn't stand up, either. Asylum-seekers' weekly welfare allowance—around $70—is 30 percent below the official

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poverty line. "Not allowing them to work is completely irrational," says Nigel Harris, professor of economics at University College, London. One recent study, he adds, showed that there were hundreds of asylum-seekers in London "who were doctors, kicking their heels, even though the health service is desperate for doctors. It's barmy."

In fact, on close examination, almost every element of the panic proves shaky. Some people do make false claims of asylum, of course—but the countries of origin topping the list are places like Somalia, Zimbabwe, and Afghanistan, where the threat of persecution is real. Asylum-seekers are not disproportionately prone to crime, either, at least according to the U.K.'s respected Association of Chief Police Officers. Nor are they likely to harbor terrorists in their ranks: Those who claim refugee status are subject to intense monitoring by the authorities. It makes far more sense, from a terrorist's point of view, to enter as a legal or illegal migrant instead and then to vanish underground.

Still, Tony Blair assiduously courts the tabloids' purportedly "middle-England" readership, and the disconnect between fact and perception on refugees hasn't stopped him from ramping up asylum controls, passing three new parliamentary acts since he came to power. The latest one, given an initial vote of approval, is the harshest yet. It abolishes many rights to lodge an appeal against a rejected application. It even allows for children to be taken into the care of social services if their parents don't leave Britain when instructed. The prime minister has largely met his much-publicized targets to slash the numbers seeking refuge—a hollow victory, not to mention a problematic one in view of the Geneva Conventions, if those deterred from entry are fleeing persecution.

Meanwhile, asylum-seekers considered a flight risk or failed applicants facing imminent deportation—more than 1,200 of them, according to the most recent figures—are being held in detention centers around Britain. David Blunkett, the home secretary, insists the tough new regime is helping silence extremists. "Across Europe, governments of the left which fail to address their public's concerns about immigration, security, and law and order have been swept from power by the right, sometimes the far-right," he wrote recently. Substitute "Jews" for "asylum-seekers," he added, "and the parallels to the 1930s become even more unsettling."

But ramping up controls hasn't quelled noisy objections on the right, and it has undoubtedly made life far harder for those seeking asylum. One part of the real solution, refugee groups say, is staring the prime minister in the face. Thousands of asylum applications are rejected on purely procedural grounds—people filling in forms incorrectly, for example—while others, campaigners allege, are turned down without being properly investigated. One in five

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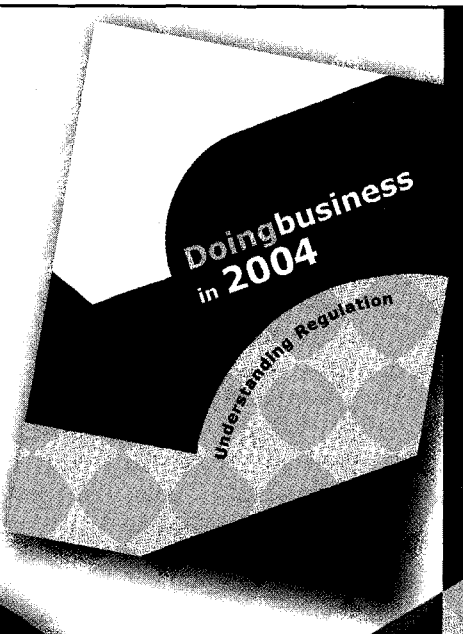

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entrants, a recent study found, is being made destitute for failing to submit their application soon enough upon arrival. Instead of trying to stop people appealing negative decisions, Blair should overhaul this decision-making process itself, they say, so that more genuine refugees are accepted right away and the dishonest can be swiftly deported, thereby discrediting many of the right's arguments about asylum-seekers.

But another part of the solution is simply to lead by example and calm down. Tait, at King's College, makes a telling comparison with the United States. "America is a country of immigrants and feels like it is," she says. "Here, though, there's a constant sense of Britishness being diluted. And yet the U.K. is much more of a country of immigrants than it realizes." There's little doubt the Blair administration, in its gut, embraces this latter, cosmopolitan version of Britain; after all, Labor has drawn support from a range of immigrant groups, including many South Asia–born Britons. But, unless Labor says so loudly, it will continue to be drowned out—and dictated to—by those who peddle fear and hate. ■

Umm El Fahm Dispatch

Benign Neglect

BY YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

SHEIK HASHEM ABDEL RAHMAN, the Islamist mayor of this Arab Israeli town bordering the West Bank, has just returned from pilgrimage to Mecca and is receiving well-wishers in his salon, which is decorated with photographs of Arab Israeli youths killed in anti-government riots. Rahman, who became mayor after his predecessor, Sheik Raed Salah, was arrested on suspicion of raising funds for Hamas, distributes blessed water from the hajj in shot glasses. Only my question about Ariel Sharon's recent suggestion to incorporate Umm El Fahm into a future Palestine disrupts the festive atmosphere. "Are we not citizens of this state?" he asks. "I have relatives all over this country. You want to put a border between us? That's the ultimate racism! That's the ultimate shoah!" Resuming his calm, he says, smiling, "Believe me, it's just politics. It's never going to happen." As I prepare to leave, though, he asks me anxiously, "Do you think Sharon is serious?"

Prime Minister Sharon's announcement of unilateral withdrawal from Gaza has obscured his other, no less stunning plan to cede the Triangle, the overwhelmingly Arab area parallel to Israel's coastal plain whose largest town is Umm El Fahm. That would mean withdrawing from territory within the pre-1967 borders and stripping some 200,000 Arabs of their Israeli citizenship—problematic under international law and vehemently opposed even by those Arab Israelis, such as Rahman, whose loyalty to Israel is questionable.

Tellingly, though, Sharon's plan has stirred little opposition among Israeli Jews. That's because most Israeli Jews share Sharon's anxiety about growing birthrates and radicalization among Israel's more than one million Arab citizens, who form 16 percent of the population. In fact, the newspaper *Maariv* recently warned, in a front-page headline, "ISRAEL 2004: EVERY FOURTH CHILD A MUSLIM." Those fears have only deepened since the riots by Arab Israelis three years ago, which seemed to erase distinctions between Arabs on either side of the green line. And, while only a miniscule number of Arab Israelis have been involved in terrorism since then, the discovery of Arab Israeli terror cells—such as the alleged Hezbollah-backed Galilee cell uncovered this week, which involved a prominent figure in Arab Israeli politics—no longer shocks. The fear of an Arab Israeli demographic and security threat cuts across political lines: The first politician to raise the idea of withdrawal from the Triangle was dovish Yossi Beilin, initiator of the Oslo process, who envisioned exchanging the Triangle for the Gush Etzion settlement bloc near Jerusalem. If Israel is about to uproot Jewish communities from the territories, many here now argue, why not move the security fence farther west and simply join the Triangle to a future Palestinian state?

FOR JEWS, THERE is no place within pre-1967 Israel more frightening than Umm El Fahm, a neglected and overcrowded town of almost 40,000, with potholed roads and nonstop traffic jams on its narrow main street. Green Islamic flags hang from balconies and street lights, while banners proclaim WE ARE ALL THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT—that is, the Islamist party headed by the imprisoned Sheik Salah and cited by the Shin Bet as a threat to the country's security. Every September, tens of thousands of Islamic Movement supporters gather here for a rally under the title, "Al Aqsa Is in Danger," spreading the baseless fear of an Israeli government plot to destroy the Temple Mount's Islamic shrines. At the entrance to the town, a billboard depicts the gold Dome of the Rock with a giant eye weeping.

Not surprisingly, few Jews dare enter here. Yet residents insist the media has unfairly stereotyped their town. Indeed, what's most disorienting about Umm El Fahm these days is the widespread affirmation of Israeli identity that one hears in response to Sharon's proposal. Despite anger at their second-class status, many residents insist they prefer to live in a Jewish state rather than a Palestinian one. Partly, the reason is economic. "You want to take us from one of the most advanced countries and put us in one of the most depressed?" says Walid Mahajni, owner of a pastry shop located on a service road with piles of uncollected garbage. But, he adds, his attachment to his Israeli passport isn't just financial. "The Israeli mentality has become part of us. When I traveled in Egypt and Jordan, I realized I couldn't live in an Arab country. We've gotten used to speaking our minds."

Some residents go so far as to endorse the security fence

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that separates Umm El Fahm from the West Bank, as a last resort to ensure that they'll remain part of Israel. Two cousins, both building contractors, are taking a coffee break in their uncle's grocery store. "As long as Umm El Fahm is on the Israeli side of the fence, I'm not against it," says Muhammad. "Umm El Fahm is an inseparable part of the state of Israel," adds Hussein, unconsciously echoing a slogan of the Israeli right about the territories. Their uncle, Bassam, who displays an Islamic Movement charity box on the counter, says angrily, "The Jews are strangers here, not us. We'll decide for them, not them for us. You want to take away my citizenship? First give me back the lands you stole from me in 1948. If you take away my citizenship and leave me without my lands, there will be nothing left for me but to become an exploding bomb."

Talk like that only reinforces Jewish desperation to be rid of the Triangle, which is the heartland of the Islamic Movement. And, while Mayor Rahman tries to project a moderate image, advocating co-existence and urging Jews to visit and even invest in his town, the message from Islamic Movement activists is apocalyptic. Dafer Murad runs the Movement's bookstore, which doubles as a toy store. Asked about the possibility of losing his Israeli citizenship, he says, "Of course I want to live in Palestine, not under the Jews. The Jew remains what he always was throughout history. Every Jew has a plan to destroy Islam. They're capable of anything, not only destroying Al Aqsa but also the Kaaba in Mecca. There is no room in this country for two nations. *Tachlis*?" he asks, using Yiddish slang for "bottom line." "One of us will have to end up buried in the earth."

Still, some insist that support for the Islamic Movement results largely from pragmatic, not ideological, motives: The Islamic Movement provides services that compensate for the government's discriminatory policy against Arab municipalities. End the discrimination, they add, and the Movement's appeal will decline. "The government created the Islamic Movement," says Mahajni, the pastry shop owner. "Give people equality and the Islamic Movement will decline, just like the [ultra-Orthodox party] Shas." In fact, there seems to be an easy co-existence in town between modernity and tradition. While most women and girls wear scarves, it isn't unusual to see young women bareheaded; in one women's clothing store, mannequins are alternately covered with scarves and blond wigs.

The proposed severance of Umm El Fahm from the Jewish state raises basic questions about Israel's future relationship with its Arab citizens, with the Middle East, and with its own territorial integrity. The very threat of rescinding Israeli citizenship could have a deterrent effect on growing extremism among Arab Israelis by emphasizing that Israeli citizenship requires basic loyalty, especially as a Palestinian state emerges just over the border. Yet ceding the Triangle could deepen the alienation of Arab citizens, one of the few populations left in the Middle East with whom Jews still have a chance for dialogue. Finally, given that the birthrate of Arab Israelis is more than double that of Israeli Jews, will Israel then withdraw from any part of its territory in which Arabs predominate—say the Negev, where Bedouin are already becoming the majority population?

IN THE VILLAGE of Mualaka, near Umm El Fahm, hidden in a valley with almond trees in white bloom, two dozen young men sit on folding chairs in the midday sun. Like Umm El Fahm, green Islamic flags fly from balconies. When I ask the men about Sharon's proposal, the response is uniformly negative. "Give me all of Nablus, even with oil wells, and I won't give up my Israeli citizenship," says a bearded young man named Ghanem. The others laugh and nod in agreement. Adds Faris, "I want to live under the democratic law of Israel, not the law of [Yasir] Arafat. If you want to get rid of us, create a separate state of the Arabs who stayed here in 1948. Just don't send us to Palestine." Says Adel, "I've worked with Jews for twenty years. How can we live without Chaim and Dudu and Shmulik?" ■

Bangkok Dispatch

Wrong Man

BY JOSHUA KURLANTZICK

BANGKOK'S TRAFFIC MAKES the Beltway look like a drive in the country. Cars crawl through the soupy city air at five miles per hour, their inhabitants sweating puddles, while hawkers stroll through the maze of vehicles peddling sweet iced tea. Bangkok cabbies survive the perpetual gridlock by listening to the radio obsessively. For years, the most popular radio program was one in which cabbies called in to describe their horrific traffic experiences to sympathetic, sexy-voiced female hosts. Other popular programs were tabloidy news programs focused on killings and sex-change operations.

But, wherever they turn the dial, today Bangkok cabbies increasingly find news of only one man: Prime Minster Thaksin Shinawatra. Stories about Thaksin now dominate the airwaves, from financial shows featuring his investment theories to sports stories about his plans to buy European soccer clubs. Indeed, it would be difficult to exaggerate the level of celebrity that Thaksin, a telecommunications tycoon before entering office, has attained in Thailand. Billboards throughout Bangkok carry his likeness, pop stars warble odes to him, and business books he recommends are featured at the city's leading bookstores. The reasons for Thaksin's extraordinary popularity, explains James Klein, Bangkok representative for the Asia Foundation, are that he has presided over solid economic growth, taken tough stands against Thailand's social ills, and demonstrated a combination of outsized public persona and can-do attitude—

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think an Asian Ross Perot without the wackiness. "He has decisiveness—a 'let's get things done' [mentality], and people like that," says Klein. In early polling for the next general election, Thaksin's party, Thai Rak Thai (Thais Love Thais), holds a large lead over the opposition.

Thaksin has become so popular, in fact, that he is poised to assume the mantle of leadership of Southeast Asia from Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed, who recently retired from office. Like Mahathir, Thaksin has begun to enunciate policies for regional development, to champion Asia's values, and to position himself as mediator for regional problems, such as the recent outbreak of avian bird flu. (To combat the impact of bird flu on the region's economies, Thaksin recently devoured a massive chicken dinner in front of the media to make the point that Southeast Asian poultry isn't dangerous.) At a recent meeting of Asia-Pacific leaders, Thaksin actively campaigned for the role of regional leader, distributing a DVD citing Thailand's economic growth as a paradigm for neighboring countries. The campaign is working: The editorial boards of two of the region's best-known newspapers, Singapore's *Straits Times* and Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*, have endorsed Thaksin, with the *Post* anointing him the "much needed voice to lead Southeast Asia." Meanwhile, regional elder statesman Lee Kuan Yew, the former Singaporean prime minister, has announced that Thailand is "doing particularly well under Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra."

Yet Thaksin is exactly the wrong role model for the region. In Thailand, he has weakened civil liberties, favored the business interests of his family and other oligarchs, and eviscerated democratic institutions. Rather than move Southeast Asia forward on the democratizing path it followed throughout the 1990s, Thaksin would turn it backward, toward crony capitalism and authoritarian rule.

THAKSIN'S PARTY WON the 2001 election after more than three years of government by the Democrat Party. The Democrats had stabilized the country in the wake of the 1997 financial crisis, but the economy had not fully recovered, and many Thais viewed the Democrats as too submissive to the International Monetary Fund. An opportunity existed, and Thaksin seized it. As the country's wealthiest man, he seemed to many Thais like a proactive CEO-type, and he ran on the slogan "New Thinking, New Action." The charismatic Thaksin (he once led an aerobics session for 47,000 Thais) used his money to launch a U.S.-style media campaign, plastering the airwaves with populist promises—to provide each Thai village with nearly free health care, for example—designed to distinguish Thai Rak Thai from the neoliberal Democrats, who had opened the economy and reduced links between top businesses and the government. Thai Rak Thai swept the January 2001 poll, winning 248 of the 500 seats in the Thai Parliament—the largest number ever for a single party.

Once in office, Thaksin was quick to use his unprecedented power. To spark the economy, he provided micro-credit grants to some 70,000 villages. He also pushed banks to loosen credit and lend to government-favored firms, boosted state spending on infrastructure, and encouraged Thais to spend again. Meanwhile, he began using tougher police tactics to combat the epidemic of methamphetamine abuse in Thailand. (Out of a population of 64 million Thais, two million are believed to be habitual users.)

At first, these policies seemed to work. Consumer spending turned around. New home purchases rose by more than 30 percent in 2003, and, when I visited Bangkok in December, I saw shopping malls packed with young Thais ogling the latest Western fashions—a far cry from the days of the financial crisis, when the Prada stores were empty, save one or two bored salesgirls. Even Buddhist monks got on the gravy train, furnishing their temples with mobile phones and Mercedes. More broadly, Thailand's economy grew by 5 percent in 2002 and by 6.3 percent in 2003. And, at least initially, stepped-up enforcement of drug laws seemed to work, sparking a sharp rise in the price of methamphetamines. "On the surface, everything seems fine," says one prominent Thai business leader. "On the surface."

But, even early on, Thaksin, notoriously authoritarian as a CEO, showed signs that his real goal was to obtain unchallenged authority over the country. "Thaksin quickly started undermining all the institutions that had created Thailand's democratic transition [from the dictatorship that ruled until 1992]," says one retired Thai official. Klein agrees: "Thaksin is not operating from a democratic standpoint—he doesn't have a lot of democratic values up front." As early as 2001, Thaksin was already announcing in interviews that no one should criticize him. That year, Thaksin's telecommunications company bought iTV, Thailand's most independent TV station, and promptly fired journalists unwilling to follow the party line. He also began using the Thai authorities to threaten local reporters: According to journalism watchdog Reporters Without Borders, in August 2001, two Thai-language dailies, *Thairath* and *Krungthep Turakij*, "received a direct warning from a police officer for being 'irresponsible and dangerous to society.'" Similarly, he forced the resignation of reform-minded military officers and government employees who had criticized his policies, such as the former governor of the Bank of Thailand, Chatu Mongol Sonakul, and the head of the army, Surayud Chulanont. Thaksin has replaced them with relatives and cronies, such as his cousin Chaisit Shinawatra, who was promoted to lead the army. Called before the country's Constitutional Court in 2001 to answer charges that he had concealed $230 million in assets from the taxman, Thaksin openly questioned whether Thailand even needed an independent judiciary. (Thaksin was acquitted amid allegations that the Constitutional Court had been pressured by figures close to the prime minister.)

In recent months, Thaksin's autocratic tendencies appear to have grown even stronger, emboldened by the combination of his high popularity—in part the result of an economy juiced by state spending—the weakness of the opposition Democrats, and the willingness of the White House to

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ignore his abuses, because Thailand is a solid partner in the war on terrorism. "Thaksin is really squeezing now," says one editor at a prominent newspaper, who has watched as Thaksin's associates have pressured his bosses to quash his negative reporting. Meanwhile, the Anti-Money Laundering Office, which is supposed to probe criminals, has started investigating the finances of senior journalists critical of Thai Rak Thai. And, late last year, Thaksin's associates bought a share of the Nation Group, which publishes the best major independent newspaper in Thailand.

The premier also has utilized government policies to enrich his telecommunications empire and close allies. One official told me that Thai Airways International, the state airline, has begun flying routes to Chittagong, Bangladesh—just because Thaksin's company wants to win a mobile-phone contract there, and the route provides some income to the Bangladeshi government. Since there are few passengers to fill the Chittagong planes, the Thai government has resorted to packing them with crates of tropical fruit, which it essentially gives out free to Bangladeshis. Similarly, one of the Thaksin family's companies recently won an eight-year tax holiday decreed by the government, and, during the weeks I visited in December, Thaksin's wife won a state auction for a prime piece of real estate in Bangkok. Overall, eight of the top ten business groups in Thailand, many with links to Thaksin's empire, have representatives in his Cabinet. "The government is dominated by businessmen who are doing things in government to support their business," says one Thai corporate leader.

Worse still, Thaksin has undermined Thailand's standing as a regional beacon for human rights by launching brutal social-order campaigns. In early 2003, Thaksin threatened that Thailand, which had protected displaced persons for three decades, would start forcing Burmese refugees back into Burma, where they would likely be imprisoned—or worse. Later, Thaksin banned nongovernmental organizations from protesting in Bangkok and launched a "war on drugs" in which police were ordered to shoot suspected drug dealers on sight if they tried to resist arrest. As Thaksin told reporters, "In this war, drug dealers must die." According to Thai human rights organizations, over 2,500 people have been shot dead in the war on drugs, including a large number of innocents; many have been killed by gunshots to the back of the head, suggesting they were not resisting arrest. Perhaps not accidentally, this war on drugs has created a political climate in which many Thais fear they could be killed if they criticize the government, says one Bangkok human rights activist. (The activist notes that he himself is followed everywhere by Thai intelligence.) Yet Thaksin has followed up the drug war with other social-order campaigns, including a battle against what he calls "dark influences," such as criminals, gangs, and essentially any other threats to public order—a term so broad that it could conceivably encompass any Thai who opposes the prime minister.

Today, Thailand in some respects resembles pseudo-authoritarian Singapore more than the freewheeling Bangkok of the mid-'90s. In May 2003, global watchdog Freedom House downgraded the Thai media from "free" to "partly free," a blow to a country once considered to have one of Asia's most vibrant presses. The Thai Human Rights Commission, an independent agency, reports that human rights violations have increased significantly under Thaksin.

"The current situation [of extra-judicial killings] is worse than during Sarit [Tanarat's] era," a time of absolute dictatorship, Vasant Panich, a commissioner of the National Human Rights Commission, told Thai reporters last year. (In response to complaints, Thaksin's party threatened to remove the head of the Commission.) Even Bangkok's famous nightlife has become notably quieter, as bar owners fear rampaging police. Inbred capitalism has returned: A new study by Vanderbilt University of links between politicians and business found that, in Thailand, companies with close connections to top political figures comprise more than 40 percent of publicly listed firms. (Worldwide, the figure is 8 percent.) And, despite the war on drugs, speed usage remains high, with Thai officials estimating that one billion pills came into the country in 2003. Outside my Bangkok hotel, I watched as motorcycle taxi drivers, the city's traditional narcotics suppliers, stopped throughout the night for a steady stream of young Thais, none of whom wound up taking a ride.

For now, Thaksin's assault on democracy has been obscured by economic growth. "No one wants to talk about the rule of law anymore, because everyone is preoccupied with economic performance," says one business leader. But that growth is not built on a totally solid base. Many of the grants to villages have been wasted, economists say. For example, though the government spent heavily to promote small winemakers, the wineries have received little instruction and produced repellent-tasting vintages. Meanwhile, deficit spending has created spiraling public debt, and government pressure on banks to lend to certain companies has resulted in bad loans—Standard and Poor's has estimated that they comprise 30 percent of the assets in Thailand's financial system. On top of this, personal debt has skyrocketed: The Thailand Development Research Institute, a local economics think tank, estimates average household debt in Thailand is now more than five times household monthly income. As a result, if the economy droops even a bit, many banks and individuals could default. "For this year, the economy is OK. Next year, maybe. ... But, after that, I'm worried," says one business executive.

Bad loans. Unwise spending. Household debt. Crony capitalism. And now avian bird flu, which could throw another wrench in the economy—despite Thaksin's chicken meal, many foreign countries have banned poultry exports from Thailand. It's not just the situation in Thailand today. It was, with the exception of the flu, also essentially the situation in spring 1997, just before the Asian financial crisis. Last time around, when the economy began to go downhill, the Thai government suddenly collapsed in a wave of public anger. That wouldn't be such a bad thing this time, either. ■

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Dean's supporters face retribution.

Oops!

BY FRANKLIN FOER

With John Kerry cruising to victory, these are supposed to be healing days for Democrats, when they embrace old adversaries and apologize for vicious attacks launched during the primaries. But now that Howard Dean has fallen, some in Washington can't resist kicking the corpse one last time. Last week, I called Ivo Daalder, an alumnus of Bill Clinton's national security team, at his Brookings Institution office. And, while etiquette might dictate that Daalder lavish praise on the vanquished candidate, he spent our phone conversation critiquing Dean's foreign policy. In Daalder's view, the Vermont governor's positions on Iraq range from the facile—"bringing into [Iraq] one hundred thousand Muslim troops that don't exist"—to the self-destructive—"I didn't like that he criticized the [Democrats] senators who voted for the eighty-seven billion dollars. We can't get things right in Iraq without the funding."

What makes this rebuke of Dean's foreign policy particularly odd is that Daalder was himself a primary architect of that policy. It was Daalder who helped draft the speech Dean delivered at the Pacific Council for International Policy last December, outlining his approach to national security. In foreign policy interviews Dean gave to *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* a day before that speech, Daalder sat by the governor's side. Similarly, it was Daalder who presided over a question-and-answer session at the National Press Club, when the Dean campaign unveiled its foreign policy team. According to one of his Brookings colleagues, who watched a procession of high-powered Democrats traipse to Daalder's office to pay respect to Dean, "Ivo was The Guy."

In the wake of Dean's unraveling, however, Daalder is promoting a revisionist history of the campaign, where his status is downgraded to something significantly less than The Guy. "My position is that I'm happy to advise anyone." He pauses before adding, "I don't have a central role, and I never did."

Why is Daalder backpedaling so furiously? Because he understands that he could suffer payback for his Deaniac days. Dean, after all, famously took aim at Washington politicians, at one point referring to them as "cockroaches." And the feeling was largely mutual. Many in the Democratic Party establishment felt the Dean campaign represented the unmaking of Clinton's political legacy—a return to the days when the party failed to package its policies for mainstream consumption. Despite this, when Dean established himself as the front-runner, some Washington Democrats followed Al Gore's lead and jumped on people-powered Dean's bandwagon anyway. Thirty-five congressional Democrats endorsed him before Iowa—more than endorsed any other candidate—caucusing regularly at California Representative Zoe Lofgren's house. Similarly, several dozen pro-Dean lobbyists congregated weekly in the conference room of power law firm Hogan & Hartson. "You had a lot of people on K Street joining right before Iowa," says lobbyist Toby Moffett, a regular participant in the meetings. "They wanted to attach themselves to a winner."

But Dean turned out not to be a winner. And now, those Democrats who resisted Dean's anti-establishment revolution are enjoying full-fledged schadenfreude at the expense of their pro-Dean colleagues. "Is [Tom] Harkin still dancing around?" asks one Senate aide, referring to his lively stump speeches on Dean's behalf. The anti-Deaniacs particularly enjoy the irony that Carol Moseley Braun endorsed Dean—and received a $20,000-per-month travel stipend from his campaign—just as it was forced to put its workers on a pay holiday. "Let's hope she asked for the money upfront," jokes one.

Officially, the Kerry campaign pledges to bring the party together and to move past such gloating. But some establishment Democrats, both inside and outside the Kerry campaign, still intend to punish the Dean heretics. And, while well-known politicians, such as Gore, Harkin, and Moseley Braun, may endure the most public abuse, the people who may ultimately suffer explicit retribution for their Dean-boosting are cogs in the Democratic machine—people like Daalder, who toil in think tanks or union leadership or groups like the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC). As one former high-ranking Clinton administration official puts it, "Will they work again in this town again? I hope not."

Start with the foreign policy wonks. In most campaigns, the wonk is a lonely, unwanted figure who places calls to campaign headquarters in the hope that he'll be allowed to add a paragraph to a position paper that will only be read by fellow wonks. For the Dean campaign, by contrast, collecting Washington wonks was a matter of necessity, a way to add gravitas to a campaign identified with bloggers and aging hippies.

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This was particularly true on foreign policy, where Dean had no public experience. As a result, the Dean campaign's pursuit of foreign policy experts was remarkably aggressive. According to one Democratic insider, Dean sent emissaries to the house of former State Department spokesman Jamie Rubin on three separate occasions, in addition to courting Rubin personally. It wasn't just the marquee names that got this treatment. Dean also assiduously wooed less well-known Clintonites. "It was just weird how much effort they put into this," says an aide to another candidate.

By the time Dean began assembling his national security team, though, most of the Democratic foreign policy establishment—which is now heavily clustered at the Brookings Institution—was already quietly committed to the Kerry, Wesley Clark, and John Edwards campaigns (in the case of some wonks, all three at once). Without the party's A-list names, the Dean campaign began searching for advisers in less glamorous quarters. For their foreign policy rollout, they signed up former Secretary of State Warren Christopher and former national security adviser Tony Lake—veterans of Clinton's first term. But, in Democratic circles, Clinton's first term is widely considered a low point in the party's foreign policy, and, in any case, Christopher and Lake weren't substantive advisers. So, last fall, Dean recruited two mid-level Clintonites from Brookings for his day-to-day needs, former Director of European Affairs at the National Security Council Ivo Daalder and former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice.

For many in the Democratic foreign policy establishment, Dean was seen as dangerous. They worried that his strident opposition to the Iraq war would revive old clichés about the party's pacifism and that his claim that Saddam Hussein's capture did nothing to enhance U.S. security would prove fodder for countless GOP ads. No one was more concerned on this score than Daalder's Brookings colleague and occasional co-author, Michael O'Hanlon, who penned scathing op-eds in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Times* attacking Dean. O'Hanlon, who advises several of the candidates—including Kerry—told me, "More Democrats should have recognized [Dean's] danger and spoken out against him." Within Brookings, O'Hanlon's pieces were seen as a direct assault on Daalder and Rice and a break with the institution's genteel mores. One Brookings fellow describes them as "just bizarre. Forgive me, but that was personal, not professional." Others at the think tank reported witnessing loud, uncomfortable hallway arguments between Daalder and O'Hanlon over Dean.

At the time, Dean was still riding high, and—O'Hanlon's attacks notwithstanding—so were Daalder and Rice. But now that Dean is done, Rice and especially Daalder may find their career prospects also dimmed. When I spoke with the foreign policy gurus who would likely stock a Democratic administration, they seemed to regard the Dean campaign as a debilitating black mark on one's resumé. It doesn't help Daalder that he took an aggressive posture during Dean's glory days. Instead of privately conceding his candidate's foreign policy shortcomings, Daalder defended him to the hilt. "After Dean delivered the line about Saddam's capture, Ivo was quite animated in defending that sentence," says one Brookings fellow. And, as a former Clinton administration official told me, "If you're a policy adviser, you exist to stop lines like that from being delivered. And, if it gets delivered over your objections, you have an obligation to fall on your sword. This whole campaign causes me to question [Daalder's and Rice's] judgment."

As Kerry's consolidation of power continues, rancorous debates over the Dean campaign will probably disappear from the hallways of Brookings. But that doesn't mean that those disputes will be forgotten. One fellow at the Brookings Institution accuses Dean's foreign policy advisers of "contributing to a [campaign] that could have helped their careers but hurt the party." It doesn't look like Brookings will be regaining its gentility any time soon.

ANOTHER CASE OF Howard Dean buyer's remorse was visible on the front pages this week, when Gerald McEntee, the head of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), yanked his union's endorsement of the former front-runner. The newspapers described AFSCME's withdrawal of support as a sign of the Dean campaign's impending doom. And it is certainly that. But it may also be a sign of McEntee's impending doom.

Over the last 15 years, McEntee acquired an almost mythic reputation within the labor movement for shrewd political judgment. When most of labor rallied behind Harkin's 1992 bid for the presidency, McEntee bucked his comrades and embraced long-shot Bill Clinton. During the 1995 campaign for AFL-CIO president, McEntee did more than anyone in the movement to install the underdog John Sweeney. And, in return for these gambles, in 1996 he was rewarded with the mother of all AFL-CIO appointments: head of the federation's political education committee, a position that placed him in charge of labor's multimillion-dollar voter-turnout operation.

At the beginning of last year, McEntee set out to play kingmaker once again. While the industrial unions were trying to rally the AFL-CIO around longtime ally Richard Gephardt, McEntee was fawning over Kerry. In February, McEntee told the Associated Press—and any other publication that would listen—that "Kerry would have the best chance" of overcoming George W. Bush's wartime glow. But, when the Kerry campaign lost its early luster last spring, McEntee began searching for a new horse. The next object of his affection was Clark. When McEntee invited Clark to his union's L Street headquarters for a meeting last July, the general hadn't yet decided to fling his hat into the race. But McEntee likes to flaunt his machinations to the press. According to labor officials, without warning Clark, he invited a scrum of reporters to surprise the general with microphones and cameras as he exited their tête-à-tête.

McEntee's flirtation with Clark, however, was as short-

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lived as it was public. The abortive nature of their romance apparently had less to do with the merits of the general's candidacy than with the internal politics of the labor movement. McEntee's chief rival within the AFL-CIO is Andy Stern, head of the Service Employees Industrial Union (SEIU), whose membership rolls have grown in recent years thanks to its recruitment of government workers who had traditionally joined AFSCME. Long before Dean emerged as a viable candidate, Stern had praised the Vermont governor for his emphasis on health care, SEIU's defining issue. As the Dean campaign caught fire last summer, Stern and his left-leaning rank and file moved toward endorsing him. And this, in turn, spurred McEntee to action. "The prospect of Stern taking the spotlight for himself pissed the hell out of Jerry," says one Washington labor official. So, McEntee countered Stern's impending endorsement by quickly moving AFSCME behind Dean, too.

By backing Dean, McEntee and Stern were explicitly rejecting Gephardt. For months, the industrial unions had been campaigning for the AFL-CIO to endorse the former House minority leader. Their attachment to Gephardt was deeply personal—union organizers in Iowa wore I GAVE MY BLOOD FOR GEPHARDT pins—but it was more than that, too. "If you don't stand behind a guy who's been with you for more than twenty years, how are you going to be able to convince other politicians to take risks on your behalf?" asks one AFL-CIO official. Thanks in large part to McEntee and Stern's dissents, Gephardt's allies failed to win the two-thirds vote of AFL-CIO's member unions necessary for an endorsement. It didn't help McEntee and Stern's standing within the movement that the Dean and Gephardt campaigns collided head-on in Iowa, in effect requiring AFSCME and SEIU to go to war against the industrial unions backing Gephardt. Nor did it help that the ensuing nastiness between the campaigns knocked Gephardt into fourth place—and out of the presidential race.

But, while Gephardt supporters in the industrial unions hold both McEntee and Stern responsible for their candidate's demise, they largely give Stern a pass, because SEIU's endorsement was the result of a vote by its left-leaning executive board. McEntee is not so lucky. Not only did he personally make the executive decision to endorse Dean, his grounds for doing so were viewed as hypocritical. Last May, McEntee told *Roll Call* that he wanted a candidate tough on national security, going so far as to praise Joe Lieberman for coming out "stronger, stronger and stronger on the issue of Iraq and terrorism." But, when he cast his support with Dean, he gave exactly the opposite rationale for endorsement, praising Dean for his consistent opposition to the war. "[Dean's] position on Iraq, when it wasn't sort of a favorite thing to do, took a tremendous amount of courage," he told CNN's Judy Woodruff in November. Such flitting from candidate to candidate—Kerry to Clark to Dean—and rationale to rationale, made his motives look dubious at best. "It was clear that he made his decision for entirely Machiavellian reasons," says a Senate Democratic aide close to the labor movement.

There's another reason McEntee could pay a higher price than Stern. McEntee is chairman of the AFL-CIO's political committee, and, therefore, in a position to be punished. Although this is an appointed position—and Sweeney won't easily abandon McEntee, whose members provide crucial support for his presidency—some of the industrial unions are considering mounting an orchestrated movement to pressure Sweeney to dump McEntee nonetheless. In McEntee's stead, some of the industrial union leaders have suggested that Sweeney install Harold Schaitberger, the head of the firefighters' union—and one of Kerry's most stalwart supporters. "During a presidential election, do you want your top political guy to be Jerry after he threw Kerry over the side like that? What kind of message does that send?" asks one labor official. Schaitberger doesn't deny that some of his comrades have been touting him as McEntee's replacement. "Jerry is a friend," he told me diplomatically. "He's brilliant, but he can be very forceful. It's fair to say that he invokes strong feelings." When the AFL-CIO executive council convenes next month at the Sheraton Bal Harbour in Miami, those strong feelings could conceivably force McEntee from office.

Over the last 20 years, there have been few things the labor movement and the centrist DLC have agreed upon. But Howard Dean's implosion has brought the protectionist unions and the free-trade-loving DLC together on at least one thing: their disdain for pro-Dean heretics in their midst.

Though Dean was a certified New Democrat during his years as governor of Vermont, his presidential campaign practically baited the DLC into attacking him. Dean identified himself as the champion of the "Democratic wing of the Democratic Party"—implying that the DLC, and centrist Democrats in general, were quasi-Republicans. Last May, Bruce Reed and Al From, the president and chairman of the group, struck back in a high-profile memo: "What activists like Dean call the Democratic wing of the Democratic Party is an aberration: The McGovern-Mondale wing, defined principally by weakness abroad and elitist interest-group liberalism at home." Dean used the DLC counterpunch as a pretext for escalating his rhetoric further, explicitly denouncing the group as the "Republican wing of the Democratic Party." His aides began mockingly referring to it as the "Disappearing Lieberman Campaign."

Yet, even as Dean launched these attacks, he accomplished a stunning coup: He managed to pry a handful of DLC stalwarts away from their ideological home base. Three of the elected officials on the DLC's "New Democrats to watch" list—Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley, Arizona State Senator Ken Cheuvront, and New York City Councilwoman Eva Moskowitz—defected to Dean. In December, New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevey endorsed him, too—a painful loss given that recent electoral defeats in the South had left McGreevey as one of the most promi-

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nent New Democratic governors. Months earlier, Ted Mondale had joined the Deaniacs. Walter's son and a former official in the Jesse Ventura administration, Mondale had been trumpeted by the DLC as a symbol of how the centrists had wrested a younger generation of pols from the grasp of paleoliberalism. More painful still was the apostasy of Simon Rosenberg, head of the centrist fund-raising group the New Democrat Network, who remained neutral in the race but spent the fall and winter defending the Dean campaign against the DLC's charge that it represented resurgent McGovernism.

But the most painful defection of all was that of Harvard Professor Elaine Kamarck. Kamarck had made her name in the 1980s as a wonk on the staff of the Progressive Policy Institute (PPI), the DLC's in-house think tank. During the '90s, she served as Gore's domestic policy adviser, overseeing his reinventing-government initiative, the quintessential Third Way program. Kamarck had been one of the prime explicators of the DLC's electoral strategy. In 1989, after the Michael Dukakis debacle, she co-authored an essay for PPI called "The Politics of Evasion": "Liberal fundamentalists argue that the party's presidential problems stem from insufficiently liberal Democratic candidates who have failed to rally the party's faithful," she wrote. "The facts, however, do not sustain this allegation." But, over the course of last fall, Kamarck became one of Dean's most vociferous defenders in the press, culminating in a January column in *Newsday* endorsing Dean. As my colleague Jonathan Chait has pointed out, this meant embracing a candidate whose electoral strategy she had debunked 14 years earlier. (When I asked Kamarck about the inconsistency, she replied, "Well, the nation's changed. We're living in a fifty-fifty electorate. You can win elections with an excited base.")

Kamarck's colleagues won't bash her on the record. But, with the protection of anonymity, they turn harsh. One ex-Clintonite says, "This town is famous for its opportunism, but it's a terrible mistake to turn on your friends and join someone else's bandwagon." Another prominent New Democrat complains, "As we criticized Dean, Elaine rushed in to blindly defend him."

For the elected officials who endorsed Dean—like McGreevey or O'Malley—it's hard to calculate whether there will be long-term costs. Some aggrieved colleagues suggest they have potentially damaged their reputations in the eyes of the DLC-friendly network of donors and perhaps could lose access to the p.r. services that the DLC performs by trumpeting politicians in its publications and conferences. But, for Kamarck, the costs are much clearer. According to New Democrat sources, it is unlikely that she'll be invited to speak at centrist Democratic conferences or to write in the New Democrat journals that have been her prime stage for the last 20 years. "How can you think of her the same way again?" asks one Democratic wonk.

This may explain why Kamarck is now trying to distance herself from Dean, just like Daalder and McEntee. She now argues that she "stopped just short of endorsing Dean"—not the impression one would get from the column she wrote last month pronouncing Dean "the strongest candidate against Bush that the Democrats have." But it may be that you really can't go home again. When I mentioned some of the derisive comments made by her New Democrat colleagues, she showed just how thoroughly she had internalized Dean's anti-establishment message. "That's stupid Washington bullshit," she said. And there was one other response she wanted to share with her erstwhile friends: "Fuck 'em."

IN OFFICIAL STATEMENTS, the Kerry campaign echoes the conventional wisdom that Democrats are too consumed by their desire to beat Bush to spend much time hating one another. They predict a Democratic Party lovefest in Kerry's big tent. "Put on your lipstick," the Democratic strategist Donna Brazile told me. "There's going to be a lot of kissing going on." But many of the policy types who would likely assume top positions in a Kerry administration still hope to punish the opportunism of the erstwhile Deaniacs. "It's going to be hard to forget," says one Kerry adviser.

Still, Brazile is basically right. The Kerry campaign isn't brimming with hatred. In fact, many in its ranks feel a certain empathy for the Deaniacs. After all, many of Kerry's advisers signed up for his campaign in early 2003, thinking they had hitched themselves to the clear favorite in the race. Then they watched for an entire year as Kerry's numbers sank and sank. Ed Kilgore of the DLC, a Kerry adviser who helped write the candidate's book *A Call to Service*, says he was subjected to merciless ribbing. "People treated you like you made a calculated decision to sign on with the front-runner—so you got what you deserved." During Kerry's months in the wilderness, Kilgore's comrades in the campaign sunk into depression, discussing their post-campaign career options and jokingly comparing their candidate to Edmund Muskie, another derailed front-runner from New England. "It was a miserable, lonely time," says Schaitberger. Then, after Kerry's Iowa win, his fortune reversed again, and, in the blink of an eye, he went from also-ran back to front-runner. As one Kerry aide puts it, "I always stick out campaigns and lose. This is the first time I have ever benefited from patience." Perhaps there is still hope for the Deaniacs after all. ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Holy in Hollywood

THE TITLE OF **LATTER DAYS** derives from the formal name of the Mormon religion, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Chiefly the story is about one young Mormon, how he came to be excommunicated, and what happened in his own latter days.

The setting is Hollywood, in a not-quite-grungy district whose buildings—small imitations of grand villas—seem to say, "What if we didn't quite make it? We're still in Hollywood, we still breathe the same glitzy air as those who did." To this neighborhood come four young Mormons, called Elders, who have been sent by their church as missionaries in this rather secular city. The contrast is sufficiently graphic right from the start. Four young men who do not date or drink or smoke or use profanity are set down in a community lightheartedly different, and these four mean to affect that difference. The Mormons' nearest male neighbor is a young gay man named (as it drolly happens), Christian, called Chris, who is handsome and quick-witted and smooth and who devilishly sees the quaint quartet as a challenge. So the stage is almost programmatically set.

LATTER DAYS
(TLA)

Although a good deal of what happens is predictable, the writer-director C. Jay Cox makes much of it pleasant. Chris has a housemate, a young African American woman with singing ambitions, and both of them work as waiters in a chic restaurant (owned by the now-mature Jacqueline Bisset). Their friends in the restaurant crew, gay males and straight females, are snappily written and played. Their kitchen chats, their spats and embraces, are of a sort that we have learned to expect, but at least these people fulfill their choric function with some zest.

Aaron Davis, one of the Mormons, meets Chris and begins his work, as he thinks, but Chris notes only that Aaron is attractive. Chris bets his restaurant friends fifty dollars that he can seduce Aaron. At least and at last Chris manages to inveigle a kiss—in the midst of which the pair are discovered by the other Elders. Aaron is at once shipped back home, and the film moves from patterns of recent decades into older patterns that are here imposed on recent material. Chris discovers that he has fallen in love with his quarry, pursues the genuinely riven Aaron, and matters conclude comfily.

The screenplay is schizoid. The first half is figuratively brassy, but then the violins begin to soar. (Even in the first half, Cox's screenplay has reminders of the past. As long ago as 1933, in *Sailor, Beware!*, a man bets his friends that he can seduce someone, then falls in love with the seductee and is embarrassed by winning his bet. In *Guys and Dolls*, a worldly fellow seduces a Salvation Army woman and is himself changed.) When we move into the second half of *Latter Days*, we are well out of the cool atmosphere of the start and are back in old-time Movieland.

This is Cox's first direction of a feature, and he has chosen to shoot the film with an overlay of sepia tone, rather than blunt colors, perhaps to provide a romantic patina. Though he moves things along easily, he apparently feels that telling the story is not enough. Some of the lighting gets egregiously theatrical—the excommunication scene, for instance—and he resuscitates a weary device, circling a couple while they kiss.

But two matters in the film strike home. Chris is played by an actor new to me, named Wes Ramsey. He is a discovery, or ought to be. (A nod here to Cox, who presumably cast him.) Ramsey, most of whose previous work has been in television, could prove a real addition to the strength of American film. He is handsome in a characterized way, not Jude Law perfection but Antonio Banderas masculinity. His credibility is not even a question. He has a good voice, and (a surprisingly uncommon accomplishment) he can laugh on cue. He establishes Chris's temperament so quickly that, early in the film, when an Elder makes a proscriptive remark to him and Chris says nothing, the audience chuckles because we know what he is thinking. Compared with the milky Ben Afflecks who have come up lately, Ramsey is a real force. An actor's career is not entirely his own to make: he depends to a great degree on others. Good luck to Ramsey.

Second, there is a welcome side to the very conventions in the film. Another way to put it: a gay film can now be treated conventionally—it does not need an air of courage or pioneering. Gay films exist, as do gay plays, songs, television shows—every kind of cultural and social expression. It is rather late in the day even to be noting such matters, still the assumptions of *Latter Days* are markedly agreeable.

The turning point of acceptance on this subject came in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Before that change, candid homosexuality was extremely rare in films. A key instance of change: in 1969 Rex Harrison and Richard Burton, both idols of women, appeared as a gay couple in *Staircase*. Other openly homosexual films surrounded it and followed it, and before the 1970s were out, a drastic change of public attitude prevailed. One famous American playwright now says—frequently—that he never denied being gay. Of course he didn't. He never denied it because, before the change of attitude, he presumably was never asked. Such a question would have had a tinge of the libelous. After the change, both interviewer and subject could be frank.

Apropos of Jacqueline Bisset in *Latter Days*. Aging has a sad effect on some good actors, quite apart from their looks. When Michael Caine returned to the screen, in the mid 1990s, after an absence

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of several years, he had lost his edge. From his start, beginning with *Zulu* (1964) he had shown an incisive power, a kind of astringent truth. This tightness has lately gone flabby. Now here is Bisset returning after a considerable absence. Her extraordinary beauty, as such, has aged well, but where is the talent that glistened in *Day for Night*, *The Grasshopper*, and so many others? In this new film, she seems to be a lesser actress playing Bisset playing this role. And where is the presence that was always an extra dividend? Aging in itself has nothing to do with it: look at Paul Newman and Meryl Streep. Possibly acting talent is like a muscle that needs relatively constant use to keep its tone. ■

Simon Blackburn

Lights! Camera! Being!

LETTERS, 1925–1975, HANNAH ARENDT AND MARTIN HEIDEGGER
Edited by Ursula Lutz
Translated by Andrew Shields
(Harcourt, 335 pp., $28)

WHEN THIS BOOK crossed my desk, it certainly jerked my memory. I remembered, rather dimly, that some time ago—it turns out to be nearly ten years—the historian Elzbieta Ettinger had written a good, sad, and unwittingly amusing book about Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger. It seemed that poor, deluded, and Jewish Arendt remained fixated all her life on her sometime teacher and lover Martin Heidegger, even after marrying, and even after realizing that he was an unrepentant anti-Semitic nightmare, pale in his sins only by comparison with his appalling wife Elfride, whose main claim to fame, apart from her marriage to the Nazi magus, seems to have been driving sick and pregnant women into laboring for the Reich.

I also remembered, rather vaguely, that this set the cat among the pigeons, producing subsequent squawks from many parties: Arendt groupies, Heidegger groupies, Zionists, anti-Zionists, Holocaust survivors, pretend Holocaust survivors, counselors, maybe the Elfride support group, historical revisionists, the whole enchilada. I quickly dismissed it all as *New York Review of Books*–sort of navel-gazing, a low-temperature conflagration in which no party came out badly in their own eyes, while the only possible explanation for the different perspective voiced by the other correspondents was their blind inhumanity and their twisted villainy.

The only scholarly question, it seemed to me, was whether Ettinger had accurately relayed the gist of the correspondence between Arendt and Heidegger. And since at that time virtually nobody had access to the archives—such is the reticence of those who themselves flutter around the flame of Being, or such, dare we think, is the possessiveness of those who scent a tenure or a royalty fluttering in the neighborhood of Being—no judgment on the fidelity of Ettinger's account was possible. But now it is.

Here, beautifully presented, and with immaculate scholarly notes, is the whole corpus of one hundred sixty-five letters from 1925, the beginning of the affair, to 1975, when Arendt died. The corpus is incomplete, in that letters, especially from Arendt to Heidegger, must have been lost, and it seems uncertain whether others were even sent; whether this is owed to the sin of epistolary onanism or to other causes remains unclear. But in advance of microscopic scrutiny it looks to me as though Ettinger was dead on. Arendt was stuck like the rabbit in the headlights, mesmerized in a girlish mystical way, for the same reasons as the followers of the Baghwan whosit or David Koresh or the Reverend Jones. Heidegger might have been stuck in turn in her headlights, and at least at the beginning he made a good shot at pretending to be. Connoisseurs of the windings of the human heart need not be surprised, although one does not have to be too fastidious to wonder why this quantity of laundry is on show.

The titanic quality of this passion depends, of course, on the ascendancy of the minds involved. Here I find myself a little nervous. Inevitably, perhaps, one has to admit that some of the testimonies in this book do not fully express the profundity of the ocean of thought that each participant took themselves alone to have plumbed. Some of the letters are indeed quite slight, or as disciples might say, exquisite. In my judgment, the minimalist number 107,

> Dear Hannah
> Next Wednesday is good for me—
> preferably in the afternoon—as I
> need the morning for work,
> As always Martin

has a pleasantly stark, almost haiku-like music, perhaps answering contrapuntally the warmth of number 105:

> Dear Hannah,
> We will expect you tomorrow at 4 p.m.
> for tea and would like you to stay for
> supper. Like you, I am glad
> Martin

The Heidegger wife, or Elfride motif ("we"), is sounded only faintly here, but it is heard again in the austere 113, which carries us into a minor key:

> Dear Hannah,
> We are looking forward to your visit
> and will expect you on Thursday,
> June 26, in the early afternoon.
> As always, Martin

But the answering, joyous 136 peals out:

> ALL THE BEST FOR THE NEW HOUSE THE NEW YEAR HANNAH

showing, perhaps, how thinking, I mean real aristocratic elite thinking, a solemn preoccupation of both these individuals, elevates one above the mundane world that afflicts the masses, who are trapped in the *Mit-zu-hand*. Neither of them, I fear, give us much more of an example of how this authentic thinking takes place, even in the longer letters, perhaps because they seem to imagine it in terms of a simple event, a kind of emission of truth or secretion of profundity, as might happen during the night.

Not that all is sweetness and light. "The amount of publicity it received," sniffs the editor, Ursula Lutz, talking of

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Ettinger's book and finding it lacking in reverence, "is in stark contrast to its quality," and she goes on to lament its "striking lack of insight and tact." Oh dear. I didn't follow it myself. I think that people who mine these seams should stick together. If you want to enjoy the early, imperious "I would like to ask you to come see me Sunday evening after 9" (number 21), or the warmer and more affecting "if no light is on in my room, ring the bell" (number 26), then surely you should be able to do so, and should join hands with others fingering the laundry.

I HAVE TALKED OF HEIDEGGER, his philosophy, before in these pages. Let us just say that there is more ambition than achievement in his work. He tells a primal story of loss: a story of exile from the shelter of Being, of loneliness and journeying and the possibility of redemption as we try to regain it. He captured the imagination of many intellectuals in the twentieth century because of this prospectus and the sacerdotal self-confidence with which he issued it, not because of any specific insight into the way it is to be realized. Indeed, specific insight is exactly what has to be avoided in his doctrine, so that we can have an orgy of emotion about the fallenness of ordinary people and the soullessness of their mechanical worldview, and the loss of meaning, and the regaining of Being in ancient Greece, and all the other tropes of Romanticism, without ever pausing to think of the different, detailed reality that often contradicts the reflexive and shallow sentiments thereby triggered.

I have read some Arendt, and with the best of intentions, but her judgments seem so perverse that, despite the genuinely illuminating and beautifully written defenses by Margaret Canovan, I find it difficult to take her seriously. There may sometimes be some use in the Hegelian idea of a concrete universal such as totalitarianism, a kind of abstract force or pattern always ready to re-emerge in human history, but then there may not be any use in it at all; details crowd in and differences require attention. Arendt has the same problem as Heidegger, and she may have learned the trick of sky-high generality from him. As someone who mistrusts airy abstractions—such as her sweeping brainchild that the Greek agora was some kind of preeminent domain of freedom, whereas the Greek household was not—I tend to find these generalizations at best irritating, and more often wrongheaded beyond redemption. This is doubtless not the end of the matter, although the secondary literature on Arendt suggests that other readers of her work are experiencing the same problem.

They Rise

All things die . . . all things but grief. And so they rise,
they who are left, into the old, old dawn,
whose fingertips just have power to graze them.

They rise in the grey and rose and grow watchful.
They know that all of it must go and the rays
that remain remain an insult to those

that didn't stay. And so they stay, and suffer
division, and grasp what they can of the living
and the dead and the old, old fingertips of rose.

PHILIP WHITE

BUT TO PARAPHRASE THE GREAT Samuel Johnson, we are not here to sell a parcel of potboilers, but to open the possibility of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. So think of the box office potential! Think of the collision and the collusion of these giants! There are models to follow:

Voiceover: And now for the very first time on the silver screen comes the film from two books that once shocked a generation. From Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and from the *International Guide to Semaphore Code*, Twentieth-Century Vole presents *The Semaphore Version of Wuthering Heights*.

Imagine the film! Martin and Hannah, using language indeed, with much the same sweep and actually the same awkwardness as Heathcliff and Cathy and the baby in the pram, using semaphore flags. The screenplay leaps off the page, warmed by the lovers' own molten words, except for short linking passages that the story arc requires. So now, again for the very first time on the silver screen—a story of forbidden love between two heroes of thought, of star-crossed passion that survived a war-torn world, a love that spanned half a century and two continents, a guilt that dared not speak its name and shocked a generation. . . .

Autumn, 1925

Wide shot: the little university town of Marburg an der Lahn. November. Gables, students, frothy steins of beer, oompah band. Julie Andrews, mountains in the background, Marty Feldman, peasants. Cut to a book-lined, wood-paneled, dimly lit room:

Martin (Russell Crowe, professorial, mustachioed, monocled, wedding ring, looking up from an old volume of Hölderlin, pulling up his lederhosen): You have lost your "disquiet," which means you have found the way to your innermost, purest feminine essence. Someday you will understand and be grateful—not to me—that this visit to my "office hour" was the decisive step back from the path toward the terrible solitude of academic research, which only man can endure—and then only when he has been given the burden, as well as the frenzy, of being productive.

Hannah (Scarlett Johansson, in braids, fiery, intense, ready for more): Perhaps this change from longing to fear brought about by the destructive desire for power, this slavish-tyrannical self-violation, might seem clearer, more comprehensible when one considers that, at least in part, an age that was so depraved and hopeless also created opportunities for monstrousness, all the more as a naturally fastidious and cultivated taste more fiercely and consciously resisted the loud, extreme, and desperate efforts of an art, literature, and culture that were basely and mindlessly pursuing their illusory existence in extravagance that verged on shamelessness.

(Then softly, to herself: I can do it, too!)

Martin: The demonic struck me! The silent prayer of your beloved hands and your shining brow enveloped it in womanly transfiguration. Nothing like it has ever happened to me. . . . You saucy wood-nymph!

Hannah: Whooeee!

Dissolve to gathering war clouds. Hannah flees to New York. Martin in uniform makes Nazi speeches. Stock footage: kaleidoscope of Hitler, tanks, bombs, concentration camps, D-Day, ruined cities. Hannah's wedding (to the one person in the story who comes out of it with decency intact).

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1949

Hannah's study in New York, swirling in cigarette smoke:

Hannah (to Karl Jaspers, who is Ralph Fiennes, off camera): He really was the most atrocious liar, and a potential murderer.

1950–1952

The Heidegger house, austere, postwar, lonely, cold. The wood creaks and moans.

Hannah: Schatzie, I'm back!

Martin: I am delighted to have the chance to acknowledge our early encounter as something lasting, and to take it up now in the later part of life. It would be wonderful if you came out to see me this evening around eight o'clock. My wife, who knows about everything, would also like to welcome you. Unfortunately she is unable to do so this evening.

(He winks to the camera, returns to an old volume of Hölderlin.)

Elfride (Cloris Leachman, in Nazi uniform, with incipient mustache): Take that, you Jewish, Gypsy, Chinese Other!

(She hurls china at Hannah.)

China: Crash!

Hannah: There is a guilt that comes from reserve; it has little to do with lack of trust. In this sense, it seems to me, Martin and I have probably sinned just as much against each other as against you. This is not an excuse. You did not expect one, after all, and I could not provide one either.... We will see each other again soon.

China: Crash!

Martin: It is best if you do not write now and do not come visit either. Everything is painful and difficult. But we must bear it.

China: Crash!

Martin (to himself): Read hermeneutically, it is the abyss of longing.

1967–1975

Freiburg. Elegiac autumn mists. The philosopher's study. On his desk Anaximander is buried in bills. Through the open window comes the din of a technology-crazed society, which drowns out the strains of Bruckner's Quintet.

Martin: Proofs ... Royalties ... Translation rights ... Sales ... Auctioning manuscripts.... Can you manage it all for me? Especially in America, where the punters are, although that has nothing to do with it. I am so incompetent with money, which lies far beneath the high pure Alpine air of thought, although I do believe that I can offer you 0 percent agency fees, but the interest on the 4.5 percent debentures should be discounted against the escrowed accumulated tax offset. May thanks remain more creative than poetry, more basic than thinking. Elfride sends best wishes.

(And then more gently:) Being is still afire, dear Hannah, philosopher princess, except where are concerned other people, commerce, the modern world, science, and common sense, all of which suck. O, origin! O, presence!

Hannah: Again I melt. Still I melt.

Crowd of students, priests, po-mos, and others hermeneutically challenged: Hooray for Heidegger! Being rules!

Hannah (in voiceover, her whisper breaking beneath the human condition): This escapade, which is mostly called the "mistake" today—after the bitterness has subsided and, above all, the numerous false reports have been revised somewhat—has multiple aspects, including, among others, that of the period of the Weimar Republic, which, to those then alive, did not, by any means, appear in the

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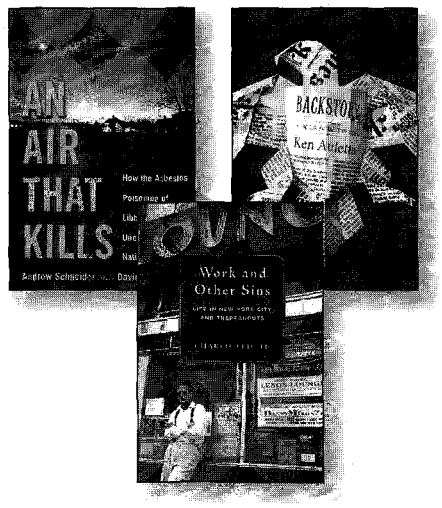

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rosy light in which it is seen today.... Of course Heidegger recognized this "mistake" after a short time and then risked considerably more than was common at German universities back then.

Dissolve. The students, the priests, the po-mos disperse. Hannah's *Sorge*-lined face fades. The only sound left is Bruckner. The camera lingers on Elfride, who is stroking a sausage and remembering the escapade. There is an enigmatic smile on her face. The credits roll.

I don't see how it can fail, especially as there are yards and yards of dialogue in this volume ready to be picked up by a crafty screenwriter. The only difficulty is knowing whether the thing should be in black and white or in color. ■

Clay Risen

Memories of Overdevelopment

CITY IN THE SKY:
THE RISE AND FALL OF
THE WORLD TRADE CENTER
By James Glanz and Eric Lipton
(Times Books, 428 pp., $26)

TIMELESS CITIES:
AN ARCHITECT'S REFLECTIONS
ON RENAISSANCE ITALY
By David Mayernik
(Westview, 274 pp., $26)

I.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 is an event forever fixed (or so we all must hope) in the American mind. But the American mind has found it almost impossible to concentrate on what has happened at the terrible site since then. While the saga of the rebuilding occasionally makes the front pages, the decisions that have gone into it are largely ignored, especially outside New York's city limits. This is a shame, because contrary to the assertions of the parties to the rebuilding that the process has been a model of democratic participation, they have repeatedly denied the public a meaningful role in the decision-making. As a result, what is emerging at Ground Zero—now still on paper, but by September 11, 2004 on the ground—is not only an insult to those who hoped that the process would itself be an American memorial to the attacks, but also an almost comic repetition of the planning mistakes that went into building the World Trade Center itself.

Today, few people outside the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey know the name Austin Tobin. But in the 1950s and 1960s, when Tobin ran the Port Authority, he was one of the most powerful men in New York—more powerful even than Robert Moses, the city's fabled and feared construction czar. Like Moses, Tobin had virtually unlimited authority to condemn, to demolish, and to rebuild—but unlike Moses, Tobin went unchecked by City Hall. As the head of the Port Authority, he answered exclusively to the governors of New York and New Jersey.

In the first decades after the Port Authority was founded in 1921 to manage the region's shipping facilities, its mandate was narrowly defined, and the Authority stuck to improving docks and overseeing the movement of goods across New York Harbor. But as commercial aviation and regional mass transit exploded after World War II, so did the Port Authority, and it used its control over the region's airports and bus terminals to build what, by the time Tobin came to the fore, was a rich and vast development empire. But nothing that Tobin—or the Port Authority, for that matter—ever developed was as ambitious, as massive, or as disastrous as the World Trade Center.

The World Trade Center, whose history is thoroughly documented in James Glanz and Eric Lipton's magnificent book, began as the brainchild of David Rockefeller, who wanted a new headquarters for Chase Manhattan in the Financial District, one large enough to stanch the flow of the city's financial base northward toward midtown. From the beginning, thanks to Rockefeller's involvement, the project was virtually unstoppable; it was, in the words of Lawrence Wien, a New York real estate mogul who fought against the center, "an unconquerable Frankenstein." But in truth the World Trade Center was more like The Blob: what started as a bank headquarters expanded quickly into an office and merchandise megacenter, whose millions of square feet were to become home to the region's entire export-import sector.

Rockefeller enlisted the help of the architecture firm Skidmore, Owings and Merrill to design the center, and he located it, originally, along the island's southeast edge, at the time the fetid, rundown home to the city's declining fishing trade. But clearing some twelve blocks of downtown real estate, let alone corralling the funds for the project, was something beyond even Rockefeller's ability. That is where Tobin came in. And from almost the minute Rockefeller pitched the plan, Tobin was sold. A development of such magnitude would be his crowning achievement, and it would make the Port Authority an almost irresistible force in the region.

All that remained was to justify the Authority's involvement; office buildings, after all, do not have a lot to do with docks and barges. But in a move that typified the scale of Tobin's ego, he declared in 1960 that building a world trade center was front and center to the Authority's interests: "The Port Authority mission always included promotion of the port," including, he argued, the erection of enormous office buildings to house the firms that controlled the port's trade. Doing so, he concluded, would cement the harbor's position in the global economy.

This pronouncement flew in the face of a McKinsey & Co. report, commissioned by Rockefeller, which showed dubious benefits from the construction of such a massive block. To deflect such doubts, Rockefeller simply dumped the consulting firm and asked the Authority to commission its own study. Not surprisingly, the Authority returned a ringing confirmation of the plan. As Glanz and Lipton write,

> Although there were sections on the geological conditions of the site and a floor-to-floor breakout of a proposed United States Custom

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House, there was not a word on any possible local opposition to the condemnation of a vast swath of Lower Manhattan—or indeed on potential objections by anyone at all. The trade center and its 'Multi-Lingual Steno Pool' would be built in Manhattan—a planners' Manhattan.

The Port Authority would use its power of eminent domain—which allows it to condemn private property for a public purpose, provided just compensation is paid—to get the land, and it would issue tax-free bonds to pay for it.

In order to placate the New Jersey government, which shared control of the Port Authority and was none too pleased with the idea of building a massive office building in New York, Tobin agreed to take over the ailing Hudson & Manhattan Railroad (now called the PATH system, or Port Authority Trans-Hudson), which runs under the Hudson River. He folded this added responsibility into the trade center project by moving the trade center to the Hudson side of Manhattan, so that it would sit atop the rail tunnel's Lower Manhattan station.

The only problem was that, unlike the former location, this site was not a slum. It was a vibrant—if not exactly high-end—commercial district known as Radio Row. Home to the world's largest concentration of electronics stores, Radio Row ran from Greenwich to West Streets and Fulton to Liberty Streets, and all of it would have to be demolished before the trade center could be built. The local shop owners, led by the gruff but savvy Oscar Nadel, became the first test of Tobin's ability to overcome the public interest in the pursuit of personal and bureaucratic glory. Nadel organized marches, press campaigns, and eventually a law suit against the Port Authority. He was able to sign up some of the city's most powerful real estate interests, high-level operators who were unhappy over the prospect of seeing several million square feet of office space added to an already weak lower Manhattan market. Nadel charged that the Authority could not exercise eminent domain, because "the project is primarily for a private purpose and not a public purpose."

Tobin was unfazed, and he pressed on with his plans, hiring the Seattle architect Minoru Yamasaki in 1962 to lead the design. In 1963 a New York state appellate division court found that the project did not constitute a public purpose, and thus could not appropriate the land—but the ruling was overturned a few months later by the New York Court of Appeals, which not only gave the mantle of the public good to the project but lauded it, amazingly, as slum clearance: "More recently the indirect benefits deriving from slum clearance and from a 'plan to turn a predominantly vacant, poorly developed and organized area into a site for new industrial buildings' have justified condemnation. To retreat from the public importance of piers, markets and slum clearance, even esthetic improvements have been held to be a public purpose justifying condemnation." Commerce, in league with an insulated government bureaucracy, had defeated the public will.

But Tobin was not yet clear to begin construction. He also had the city to deal with. The mayor's office and the Port Authority had long been, in Glanz and Lipton's words, "like a couple whose marriage has deteriorated so far that every conversation ends in argument." From the start Mayor Robert Wagner had serious reservations about the trade center planning. After all, even in its original incarnation along the East River, the plan involved the appropriation of an enormous chunk of city land—land that, under the Port Authority's tax-exempt status, would no longer earn the city money. The transfer to the west side only made things worse, as it meant the destruction of one of the city's commercial districts.

The mayor's office could deny access to the roads cutting through the site, which were city property and therefore immune to the Port Authority's power of eminent domain, but otherwise Wagner discovered that he could do very little to stop Tobin. "It is astounding to me," Wagner remarked, "that New York City, which is the major unit of government involved and affected by this legislation—fiscally, economically and socially—should not have been at the center of negotiations and deliberations and its interests given paramount consideration." Meanwhile, unknown to the city, the project continued to grow in size, to six million square feet (it would eventually expand to twelve million), and Tobin and his cohorts began to envision constructing the tallest office building in the world, a design for which Yamasaki delivered in 1964.

By the time the Port Authority won its court battle against Nadel, the project had such momentum that Wagner could do no more than delay the inevitable. The pressure to cede control of a few blocks' worth of streets, all that stood in the way of the world's largest office complex, was too much to bear. But it was left to Wagner's successor, John Lindsay, to take the last bow. By 1966, when Lindsay took office, Tobin was unstoppable, and through a mix of strong-arming and mudslinging, he convinced the mayor to step aside—largely by promising to use the dirt excavated from the site to build what is now Battery Park City, in effect boosting the city's property-tax haul. Whether Lindsay saw it as a good deal or was simply looking for a way out is not clear, but on August 3, 1966 he and Tobin shook hands at a City Hall press conference. The city had surrendered, Tobin had won, the World Trade Center would be built.

THE WORLD TRADE CENTER always had a strange relationship to New York. By the mid-1980s it had become a part of the city's iconography, a pair of cold gangly giants amid its more reserved, more proportionate brethren towers. But it also sucked much of the life out of Low-

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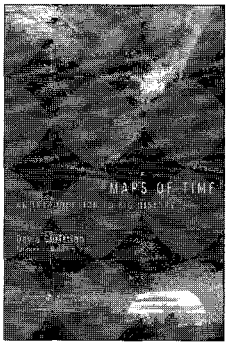

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er Manhattan. It proved a sinkhole for local real estate—especially after 1978, when the Port Authority, panicking over its floors upon floors of empty office space, made it available to everyone, in effect negating the center's original purpose of housing trade-related firms. The same held true for its commercial space, which was actually an enormous, enclosed mall that drew in shops and businesses that once lined the district's streets. And the superblock form and windswept plaza of the World Trade Center also denuded Lower Manhattan culturally. While the area was never the heart of the city, by the mid-1980s it had become a symbol for the hollowing out of the American urban environment, a place where people came to work during the day and from which they quickly fled at night. Just two years after its opening, the trade center replaced the Empire State Building in the climax to Dino di Laurentiis's re-make of *King Kong*, and the shots of terrified New Yorkers fleeing the scene captured perfectly the anti-trade center, anti-downtown mood that dominated the city for the next quarter-century.

All this was the consequence of a massive, unresponsive government bureaucracy. No truly public concern, no genuinely market-sensitive private firm, would ever dream of dropping so much office space into a single development. But the Port Authority was different, and it ruthlessly exploited that difference during both the construction and the lifetime of the center. Exempt from the city's building and safety codes, the Twin Towers' developers paid scant heed to the risks involved in constructing two 110-story towers. (The buildings' engineers, such as Leslie Robertson, had been very scrupulous, but the years of neglect in the maintenance of the place undid their precautions.) Fire safety was on the books, but it was not up to code, and when pressed the Authority simply trotted out its own dubious studies to justify itself. And until the late 1990s, the center never made money—indeed, just two years after its official opening, it was running a $20 million-a-year deficit.

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II.

So the World Trade Center, in terms of public planning, was an unmitigated disaster. Indeed, if there is a lesson to take away from the World Trade Center's history, it is a cautionary one about the results of excluding the public from the planning process. Had the Port Authority been accountable to the city, had the local community possessed some element of control over the planning process, the center might never have been built, or it would have been made to heed and to enhance the public weal, instead of merely enhancing the egos and the pockets of Tobin, Rockefeller, and the Port Authority. And yet, as the substantive phase of the planning process now gets underway at Ground Zero, it is clear not only that those lessons have not been learned, but that the very same mistakes are being made again. Private real estate and bureaucratic power, in the guise of "public purpose," are winning out over the explicit—though largely ignored—interests of the surrounding community and New York City.

Indeed, it seems that if the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC), the Port Authority, the leaseholder Larry Silverstein, and the other players in the development have learned anything, it is how to avoid the years of battling public outcry in forcing their will on the city. They have used pretty but meaningless architectural images (as opposed to actual master plans) to distract the public from substantive debate about the principles of the site's future, all the while ignoring calls from the city and from urban planners to open the process to greater public involvement. But in thinking about the downtown debacle, one is inevitably confronted with a difficult question: if not this, then what? What went wrong this time around? And what does it mean to put the public back in public planning?

Perhaps no other conceit has been more pervasive at Ground Zero than "democratic involvement." "There was something exhilaratingly democratic about how ground zero's reconstruction plan was selected," *The Daily News* editorialized late last year, gushing about how "the public participated through forums and polling." Officials at the LMDC, which is coordinating the reconstruction—and which, like the Port Authority, gets its mandate from Albany—have waxed ecstatic about the level of public input, citing as evidence the public hearing at the Jacob K. Javits Center in June 2002, where thousands of participants attacked the LMDC's original six proposals. At the hearing, one LMDC facilitator even urged the attendees to "give yourselves a nice round of applause" because "in democracy, people have a chance to speak!"

But the Javits hearing, far from advancing democracy, served, like so much else in the process, as a clever ruse to close off meaningful input and to manufacture consent around a narrow set of ideas already selected by the LMDC, the Port Authority, and Silverstein. While the LMDC responded to the public criticism of the original six plans with a new competition, the content of that criticism was never taken into account, and the new plans were little more than dressed-up versions of their predecessors. All the plans, for example, were constrained by requirements that maximized office square footage. But the public did not want fancier-looking buildings; it wanted (as the results of the Javits and other meetings showed) to have primacy given to the memorial, and a significant reduction in the amount of office space, and a design that would weave the site back into Lower Manhattan—in sum, a complete rejection of the World Trade Center idea itself.

And yet, in a painful irony made possible only by the LMDC's doublespeak notion of democracy, all those priorities have been ignored in favor of a plan that closely resembles the original six plans—including a relatively small corner of memorial space, ten million square feet of office space, a massive hotel and conference center, and some eight hundred thousand square feet of retail space (such an enormous amount of space is necessary, the agencies argue, to prepare Lower Manhattan for what they see as a future run on office space coming in the next decade). None of this was on the public's mind, and yet the results are somehow being hailed as "democratic." For the LMDC, democracy seems to mean little more than public expression—not, as the architect Michael Sorkin has noted, that "the people have the power to choose."

Since the LMDC was created by Governor Pataki in the weeks after September 11, the structure behind the re-development has been aggressively insulated from both meaningful public involvement or the

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consideration of alternative conceptions for Ground Zero. The LMDC itself is stacked with business executives and Pataki allies; there is only one member from the community and not a single representative from the victims' families. What's more, despite the fact that four of the members were appointed by former Mayor Giuliani and four by current Mayor Bloomberg, the LMDC is completely under Pataki's control. (When the LMDC's site plan committee voted seven to one in favor of a competing plan over Daniel Libeskind's, the governor simply overrode it.) Worse still, the LMDC is only one player in the process, and the only one with even a tenuous claim to the public's stamp of approval. Neither the Port Authority, which owns the land, nor Larry Silverstein, who owns the lease, the legal mandate to rebuild, and the money to do it, have any obligation to honor the public's wishes.

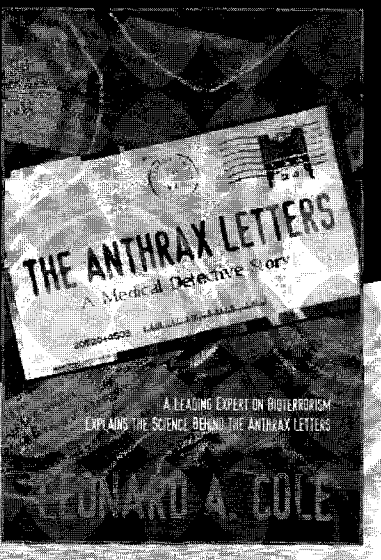
It is not surprising, then, that from the beginning the reconstruction process has been so anti-democratic. Within days of the attack, Silverstein announced his intention to rebuild the lost office space, and ever since then that commercial priority has not been seriously challenged by the Port Authority, the LMDC, or Pataki. In the month that followed, two tracks of thinking about rebuilding emerged, one within the state and private power structure, the other outside, in the architectural and public interest community. The former—quickly exemplified by the LMDC—put a stress on speed and on literal rebuilding, while the latter, which coalesced around a coterie of advocacy groups, pushed for patience and a consideration of all alternatives.

And there were more than enough alternatives: at a public symposium held at Cooper Union at the end of September 2001, almost one thousand people showed up to discuss the possibilities for rebuilding, with opinions ranging from leaving the site fallow to building outsized replicas of the original towers. Hearings such as this one—sponsored by groups such as New York New Visions and the Regional Planning Association—took place throughout late 2001 and the first half of 2002, but the general sentiment was always the same as that expressed at Cooper Union: "Most speakers," reported *The Wall Street Journal*, "made passionate bids to slow down and rethink all assumptions about reshaping the site." But none of this had any influence on decision-making. (To be fair, the LMDC did host a few panels of its own and even established "advisory councils" to "provide valuable public input," but it made clear that it was in no way constrained by the results of either.)

Meanwhile, the real power began to coalesce behind Silverstein and Pataki. Within weeks Silverstein had hired Washington lobbyists, brought on a star architect (David Childs of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill), and gathered support from local and national political leaders for his own rebuilding plans—which, despite express public opposition, were set to begin soon after the site was cleared. Not long afterward, Pataki announced his intention to lay the cornerstone on September 11, 2004, a week after the close of the Republican National Convention at Madison Square Garden. And once the LMDC was in place, there was little that groups outside this new power structure—that even the mayor—could do. Federal rebuilding funds were routed through Albany, and the city council was rebuffed when it tried to gain entrée to the LMDC. "Mr. Bloomberg," reported *The New York Times*, "has more authority to suspend alternate side of the street parking regulations than in determining the course of what happens on the tract of land just south of City Hall." By early 2002, the LMDC had largely endorsed Silverstein's intentions, and soon afterward Kevin Rampe, its president, declared that the office space was non-negotiable.

Perhaps cognizant of how such stridency might play to a still-wounded public, LMDC members went to absurd lengths to justify their rebuilding agenda. While many in the public felt that three thousand deaths negated the role that real estate should play in the process, John Whitehead, who chairs the LMDC, claimed that it is the other way around. Office space should trump memorial space, and the new towers would themselves be memorials, he told *The New York Post*, because of the victims' "loyalties" to their former employers, as if those were the primary loyalties of the victims in their lives. Even in Manhattan, real estate has never been quite so sacralized. "How do you balance the value of human lives against the value of New York real estate?" Ada Louise Huxtable rightly retorted in *The Wall Street*

"[The Anthrax Letters] offers us a wealth of detail on the case—even as it reminds us how little we know."
–James P. Pinkerton in *Newsday*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Journal: "This is a burial site, not a construction site." But recognizing such a distinction—much less taking it into account—would have negated the possibility of maximizing office space, and so the LMDC and Silverstein simply ignored it.

This willful ignorance was made all too obvious in the six schematics released by the Port Authority in July 2002. While they were clearly labeled as preliminary and non-binding proposals, they provided a first glimpse into the Authority's and the LMDC's thinking: a constrained memorial space, maximum office space, and uninspired public spaces. "It seems the trade center lease, more than any other single thing, is shaping the rebuilding plans," wrote David Dunlap in *The New York Times*. As Dunlap reported, the firm largely behind the plans, Beyer Blinder Belle, was even told to increase the office-space square footage by 40 percent.

A few days later, the LMDC, responding to an outburst of criticism, held its infamous "Listening to New York" hearing at the Javits Center. More than four thousand people showed up, and the revulsion was almost unanimous. "I want to see something that doesn't fulfill the stereotypes of what the terrorists think we are," said one individual in attendance. The plans, according to critics, were uniformly too dense, too office-centric, too bland. Many said that they wanted to see the city or the state force Silverstein out of his lease (through a sweetheart deal elsewhere, backed by political pressure), and almost all called for a fundamental rethinking of the site, with the first step being a memorial. And yet there was another telling statistic to emerge from the Javits hearing: only a third said they were confident that their opinions would have any impact on the process. They were right, though over the next six months the LMDC would go to great lengths to convince them otherwise.

Not long afterward the LMDC announced that the public had spoken, and that it would go back to the drawing board, not least by creating a competition to choose an architect and a "master plan" for the site. But clearly the LMDC did not listen to what the public said, because the results of its competition were nine dressed-up versions of the same basic ideas. Many of the competitors, such as the THINK team and Norman Foster, are gifted and experienced master-plan designers, but they were hamstrung by the LMDC's insistence on producing images, as opposed to detailed plans. Worse, with only $40,000 each to work with, it was all but impossible for the competing firms to provide the sort of in-depth work necessary for a master plan. Not that there was much difference between them. None of them reached beyond the site to re-think Lower Manhattan, nor did they take into account the innovative proposals—such as Frederick Schwartz's plan to bury West Street and use the ground above for office space—that had emerged during 2002. Moreover, the public was given to believe that what they were seeing were images as the site would appear when complete, when in fact the LMDC was never constrained even by the designs it had hand-picked to present. Ultimately, art was used to divert public attention from what really mattered: urban planning.

THE DEBATE SHOULD HAVE BEgun at a higher level of generality and urgency. Should there be a tower? Should the focus be on office space? Should the entire site be a memorial? Yet that kind of discussion never took place, because the process left little more than a month for the public to consider and weigh in on the plans. "It was a distraction from a discussion that never happened," said Sorkin. Even Giuliani weighed in, observing that the designs "put the cart before the horse.... The first thing any design there has to say to you is the significance of what happened, not the significance of the office or retail space."

Since the selection of Daniel Libeskind's symbol-soggy plan—a semi-circle of towers, culminating in the 1,776-foot "Freedom Tower," surrounding an array of cultural facilities—in February 2003, there has been no formal opportunity for public discussion at all, despite the fact that several decisions and deals have been made that call into question the structural, financial, and aesthetic viability of even Libeskind's commerce-friendly plan. (Given Libeskind's lack of actual construction experience—he has a mere three buildings on the ground—it is worth wondering whether he was selected to play the patsy rather than the master.) Much of the actual design work has been farmed out to other architects, and many of their plans so far intrude on the basic elements of Libeskind's design—Santiago Calatrava's train station, for example, alters significantly Libeskind's vaunted "Wedge of Light." Childs, whose firm dropped out of the competition, spent most of last fall battling Libeskind for control of the "Freedom Tower" design; and the final plan, released in December, is a clear victory for Childs and Silverstein. Indeed, with the unveiling of the revised plan for the memorial, the overall site plan has lost many of the most notable and attractive elements of Libeskind's original scheme, to the point that it now bears a striking resemblance to two of the six much-derided plans introduced in the summer of 2002—a good indication that the competition, touted as a breakthrough in civic involvement, was merely an elaborate trick.

In truth, though, the competition could not have been otherwise. Silverstein, who controls both the lease and the billions of dollars in insurance money necessary to rebuild, was never beholden to the results. Both LMDC and the Port Authority had long since relinquished any chance they might have had to force Silverstein out of the picture, which meant all they could do was construct the impression of public involvement—both to pacify New Yorkers and to give them some edge over Silverstein. In any case, the notion that the public was ever involved, at least in a substantive sense, was a lie. There is no concrete evidence that the concerns expressed at the Javits Center hearing or at any of the other public meetings had a significant influence on the process.

BY AND LARGE, THE LMDC, Silverstein, and the Port Authority have replicated the mistakes of the first generation of World Trade Center builders. They have ignored public concerns and failed to take into account the future relationship of the site to the surrounding community. They have attempted to bulldoze their way through legal challenges and opposition from the mayor's office and the city council. They have made a fetish of square footage at a time when the real estate market in New York, let alone in Lower Manhattan, is suffering from a glut of office space. (There are now twelve million unoccupied square feet downtown.) For all its fancy symbolism of memory, Libeskind's plan taken as a whole evokes less the tragedy or the city in which the tragedy occurred than an upstart commercial center in some Sun Belt edge city. (Even the *Times'* Herbert Muschamp, once a fan of Libeskind's design, asked:

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"How did Ground Zero come to inherit a vision of glitzy, structurally inept towers that would look more at home in an office park for some energy companies?") The process has been impelled mainly by fat egos—George Pataki's, Daniel Libeskind's, Larry Silverstein's. And those egos have chosen a coarsely triumphalist image—the massive tower—to represent their achievement. No matter how impressive the memorial turns out, it will be an office tower that grounds the site.

And because there is no opportunity for independent criticism, major planning elements have been overlooked. The "master plan," for example, is presented as an after-the-fact document; there is no consideration as to how the project will be phased in over the decade-plus construction period. Given that a substantial amount of the office and retail space will not be built for years, it is worth inquiring, as Deputy Mayor Daniel Doctoroff wrote in a letter to the Port Authority in October, whether the planners intend to leave "voids on any of the city's parcels." More alarming, perhaps, was Doctoroff's mention that "to date, we are not aware of any estimates of the costs of the master plan ... a detailed, multi-year comparison of the uses and sources of funds must be produced." In other words, how long will the site remain a hole in the ground? The planners, lacking public criticism, seem never to have even considered the question.

III.

While the LMDC and Port Authority have taken pains to place their plans behind a democratic facade, others have been more upfront about their opposition to a greater public role in the planning process. Paul Goldberger, in *The New Yorker*, remarked last year that the rebuilding process was "a struggle between democracy and vision." And William Tucker in *The New York Post* worried that public involvement would derail the process completely, warning that "after 20 years, we'll probably end up with a hole in the ground." Public planning and architecture are too important to be left to the public, these and other writers say.

The notion that there has been too much public input at Ground Zero, that the process is suffering from a surfeit of democracy, is ludicrous. Moreover, history shows that, when it comes to the planning process, more democracy, not less, is usually required for success. One of the great moments in urban planning took place in 1366 in Florence. The city was well into the process of erecting the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, and wanted the citizens' imprimatur to begin work on a daring unbuttressed dome. The plan was ambitious, to say the least, and by the standards of the building techniques of its time it was not at all clear whether it could be built. The powers that be supported the plan, which they felt would vault the city to world-class status. And that status, they decided, would be better served if the new cathedral bore the stamp of public approval. So they took the extraordinary step of putting the plan to a vote before the citizens of the city, who overwhelmingly approved it. And that vote gave the planners the momentum and the confidence to continue such a massive project, which became one of the ornaments of our civilization.

Nor were the Florentines an anomaly. As David Mayernik notes in *Timeless Cities*, during the Renaissance the role of the public was considered integral to the notion of the humanist city, one that in turn drew on classical ideas of the city as an expression of civic ideals rather than civic realities. "This allowed those cities to be always better than the people who made them," he writes, "whereas business and politics rarely provide built contexts that transcend their immediate contingent reality." But the humanist approach to city planning, Mayernik argues, has fallen apart in the wake of industrialization and the re-imagination of the city as a machine, a tool to promote human progress rather than embody it. By the middle of the twentieth century, city planners could approach their subject simply as a matter of social engineering, in which public discussion was no match for scientific methods. (Like Tucker and Goldberger, they felt public involvement would only create more problems.) Modernist city planners bulldozed entire neighborhoods in the name of "urban renewal," replacing them with civic plazas, housing projects, freeways, and cultural centers. It was only when the public finally rebelled against such wholesale destruction, embodied in the crusading work of Jane Jacobs and the fight against New York's Westway project, that top-down planning ground to a halt.

Today, beyond Ground Zero, we can find numerous examples of the public re-emerging as a force in city planning. Consider the vast number of referenda on "smart growth" initiatives, in which communities vote on nothing less than the future growth of their cities. Or take the planning process for the Oklahoma City bombing memorial, which went through years of public debate before a consensus emerged behind a moving plan for a field of empty chairs, one for each victim—strong evidence that democracy and vision are not mutually exclusive. And in many cities public involvement in the design and the construction of civic buildings is standard operating procedure. In Seattle, the plans for the main branch of the public library, designed by Rem Koolhaas's Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), went through dozens of public hearings, after which significant changes were made; the result is a building by a world-class architect that is informed, on a fundamental level, by the public interest.

Of course, it is not always easy to maintain the role of the architect, or the essential integrity of the architect's conception, in the face of increased public involvement. In Seattle, OMA was never required to adopt the public's input, only to consider it. Such a requirement would have, to a large extent, rendered meaningless the genius that an architect such as Koolhaas can bring to a project. I do not mean to suggest that architectural democracy should be exactly like political democracy; but developers and corporations and politicians should not be allowed to hide their self-interests behind the distinction.

The public need not get to vote, precisely; but it should get to air its views and see them recognized. How would such a system work? One could imagine a three-step process. First, there would be a thorough round of public debate, ranging from sponsored forums to opinion columns, to gauge the community's goals for a particular site. (This sort of open discussion was seen much more clearly during the run-up to the World Trade Center memorial competition.) Second, there would be a fully funded competition among architects, in which firms and individuals would be given the time and money needed to produce actual plans, not just flashy imagery. While nothing at the competition stage should

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be considered final, fully realized plans would give both the public and the planning authority more to work with, and it would provide a check on the sort of backroom fill-in-the-spaces work that is currently underway at Ground Zero. Finally, once a designer is chosen, the public would be brought back into the process, and through an additional series of forums be allowed to comment upon and to criticize the direction that the designers have taken. As in Seattle, the architects would not be legally required to incorporate those criticisms, but they would be morally (and even politically) required to consider them and to respond to some of them. Had this process been followed at Ground Zero, it would have taken much longer than the accelerated timetable set by the electorally ambitious Pataki; but we might have had a real shot at building something that actually embodied the city's spirit instead of trampling on it.

What all these examples—from Florence to Seattle—have in common is an appreciation for the role of ordinary citizens in the planning process. They speak for the fine pragmatic notion that public involvement allows for more ideas to be aired, thus improving the final plan. One can imagine that, had the Port Authority been forced to listen in the 1960s to animadversions from the neighborhood boards, business groups, or the mayor's office, it might not have invested in a pharaonic folly such as the World Trade Center. And were the LMDC and Port Authority now held accountable to the local public, they might have in their hands a plan that did not mindlessly recreate the mistakes of the past, or at least a plan that actually made financial sense.

The history of successful urban design also teaches that great cities physically embody the values and the ideals of their citizens—and they do so because they allow the public a substantive voice in their development. This is all the more true today, when the sheer density of our urban areas requires a democracy that is not only political, but also cultural. Urban life is guided, on a daily basis, by the multitude of decisions that go into shaping the cityscape, and the more control the public has over those the decisions, the better the city will be as a whole. "If a harmonious city is the goal," Mayernik writes, "imposing it only from above is a strategy doomed to failure. And if this were true in a nascent first century B.C. 'global' empire such as Rome, it is even truer for our twenty-first-century democracies."

What does this mean for Ground Zero? In their present state, the plans for Ground Zero are little more than an elaborately decorated attempt to recuperate real-estate value and undergird Lower Manhattan's losing fight to retain its mantle as the city's financial hub (ironically, through an infusion of office space so large as to destroy the district's market for good). But while the LMDC and the Port Authority have already made many of the important decisions themselves, it is not too late to give the public a say in how things proceed. The LMDC could institute a series of public hearings and round tables, and promise that the ideas and criticisms that emerge will be incorporated into the plans; and follow-up hearings would ensure that those ideas were instituted. In doing so, the end result would not only be a better building, but the process would itself have become a part of the memorial. But in the current planning environment, in which cynical developers have used sham democracy to undermine the public interest, such an alternative is, to say the least, a long shot. It is not the first time that the city has failed at this crucial and tortured site. ■

Rochelle Gurstein
Pleasing Decay

IN RUINS
By Christopher Woodward
(Pantheon Books, 280 pp., $24)

FOR TRAVELERS WHO HAVE EXperienced the grandeur and pathos of ruins that were once the glory of ancient Athens or Rome, it comes as a surprise to learn that what we are seeing today are tidied-up—its critics would say sterile—archaeological sites that are only as old as the last century. We are accustomed to admiring the noble remains of the Periclean age of Athens, but nineteenth-century travelers encountered an entirely different place—Turkish Athens, which after centuries of rule under the Ottoman Empire, was "interspersed," as Chateaubriand described it, "with minarets, cypresses, ruins, detached columns, the domes of mosques crowned with large nests of storks." And the remnants of ancient Rome as they existed before the unification of Italy in 1869 turn out to be equally unfamiliar. It is not only Gibbon's once-famous description of the moment he realized he would write his history of the tragic fall of Rome—"It was at Rome on the fifteenth of October 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing Vespers in the Temple of Jupiter"—that conjures up images strange and haunting. At the very center of the Colosseum once stood the shrine of the Martyrs' Cross and at its edge, the Stations of the Cross. What is more, the Colosseum, which we are used to seeing as bare, excavated, ordered, and labeled, was lush, colorful, and perfumed, overgrown with more than four hundred varieties of flowers, vines, grasses, shrubs, and trees.

The Turks who lived in Athens contentedly built their hovels on and out of the remains of the Acropolis, just as they burned marble sculptures and columns for lime without a second thought. Their insensibility to the splendors of the classical world was regarded as a scandal by cultivated travelers, even as they took advantage of the situation to enrich their personal art collections. One such traveler, Dr. Richard Chandler, reported in 1776 that he was able to purchase "two fine fragments of the frieze of the Parthenon which we found inserted over the doorways in the town, and were presented with a beautiful trunk which had fallen from the metopes and lay neglected in the garden of a Turk." And so it was with those who inhabited Rome after its successive sacks beginning in the fifth century with the Goths. Palaces, towers, basilicas, and convents rose triumphant from

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the moldering wrecks of once majestic temples, theaters, and baths of antiquity.

One can still see the physical marks left behind by the prying of marble from the walls of the Colosseum, which for centuries was used as a marble quarry by popes and noblemen. But it is far more difficult to picture medieval aristocratic families dwelling in armed fortresses built out of the decaying monuments of the ancients, just as it is hard to believe that well into the nineteenth century the poor made homes in the crannies of crumbling walls and set up their shops between moss-covered columns, and the Forum, submerged under mountains of rubbish, completely covered over with grass, was used as a pasture for pigs, sheep, and cattle (hence its name "Campo Vaccino"). In this light, the fantastic etchings of Piranesi should be regarded as our most accurate record of the remains of eighteenth-century Rome.

How is it possible, the lover of ruins wonders, to live so un-self-consciously among ruins? Can the sense of history or beauty really be so effectively stilled? Yet it is precisely this insensibility that sets such people apart from those who are painfully aware of the difference between the magnificent past and the squalid present, and are prey to spiritual, historical, and aesthetic associations of the most powerful kind. Where early Christians sometimes took moral satisfaction in the destruction of pagan Rome, the first people to lament its terrible fate, to experience the melancholy that comes with meditations on grandeur and decay, were Renaissance humanists. Poggio Bracciolini traveled from Florence to Rome in 1430 and his sorrowful reflections on the fragments of the vanished ancient city in *De Varietate Fortunae* shaped every cultivated traveler's experience of ruins:

> This spectacle of the world, how it is fallen! How changed! How defaced! The path of victory is obliterated by vines, and the benches of the senators are concealed by a dunghill.... The public and private edifices, that were founded for eternity, lie prostrate, naked and broken, like the limbs of a mighty giant; and the ruin is the more visible from the stupendous relics that have survived the injuries of time and fortune.

By the nineteenth century, such meditations on the fleeting quality of all worldly things gave way to further meditations, ever more somber and poignant, on the futility of individual striving—"I too soon shall be no more," wrote an English visitor, a certain Dr. Byron, at the Acropolis—although they were commonly tempered with such bittersweet thoughts as "other mortals, transitory as myself, will make the same reflections on the same ruins." By the time the lachrymose doctor penned these thoughts, they had already become a cliché. And this is because a new way of seeing had entered the world that not only intensified feelings of melancholy, but also added an aesthetic dimension to the experience of ruins: the picturesque. Today, the picturesque is thought of as the rather minor aesthetic key of the quaint or the pretty or it is associated with things old-fashioned, even insipid or maudlin; but once it was experienced as one of the great aesthetic delights. As late as 1849 Ruskin remarked that "probably no word in the language (exclusive of theological expressions) has been the subject of so frequent and so prolonged dispute."

One of the most startling facts about the history of aesthetics is that, as a subject of self-conscious intellectual inquiry, it is no older than the eighteenth century. Earlier artists and art lovers had a language to express their appreciation of the arts, but before the eighteenth century it occurred to no one to try to understand the faculties of taste, genius, and imagination systematically and the experiences of beauty, sublimity, and the picturesque psychologically, or to consider painting, sculpture, poetry, architecture, and music as part of the same unified endeavor called the fine arts. Since the classical hierarchy of genres placed historical painting at the top, other genres such as landscape were neglected before the seventeenth century. By the next century, however, the taste for landscape, above all, those of Claude Lorraine and Salvator Rosa, became a virtual obsession.

So the appreciation of the actual scenery of nature—mountains, clouds, waterfalls, cliffs, rocks, trees, and, of course, ruins—came late to the West and only after viewers had grown accustomed to seeing nature "improved" and "selected" by the art of landscape painting. Instead of experiencing the passage through the Alps on the Grand Tour as a dangerous, frightening ordeal or regarding fields as potentially profitable grazing or farm land, English gentlemen and ladies learned to take aesthetic pleasure in scenes and vistas. By the second half of the eighteenth century, the picturesque could be experienced in a variety of mutually reinforcing modes that intensified its particular charms. Cultivated people thus enjoyed natural scenery through the eyes of Claude and Salvator and composed letters about their aesthetic impressions, just as they delighted in poems that strove to approximate the ideal vision of the masters and gardens self-consciously modeled after their paintings, complete with faux ruins that finished the prospect, which, in turn, offered the further charms of more poems about the gardens, the ruins, their artistic designers, and of course, their inspiration, Claude and Salvator, not to mention all the sketches, watercolors, and paintings that followed from them.

For those who had acquired the habit of seeing a landscape as if it were a painting, a favorite pastime was "picturesque travel." Arthur Young's *Northern Tour* (1770) set out typical rules for viewing ruins in the picturesque manner: a ruin was best seen from a distance; it should be difficult, at times impossible, to approach; the edifice should not be able to be viewed in its entirety, and those parts that can be viewed should be "broken, rugged, terrible." These deliberate obstacles were essential for composing distance in the picturesque scene, but they were also essential when it came to another feature of the aesthetic experience: the pleasures of the imagination. Where previously the fragment had been regarded as "mutilated" and in need of restoration, it now furnished an occasion for the viewer's active fancy. In such scenes, Young instructed his readers, "the imagination has a free space to range in, and sketches ruins in idea far beyond the bold strokes of reality."

The more the picturesque mode of vision was analyzed in this manner, the more intensely the viewer's eye was trained on what were essentially painterly qualities—light and dark, shadow and color. In Reverend William Gilpin's elaborately illustrated *Observations on the Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland* (1786), there are a number of passages where his aesthetic absorption is so complete that the pleasures of melancholy or the imagination escape notice. At Tintern he instructed his readers to observe the way "the ornaments of Time" had been "superadded"

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to the beauty of architecture, noting about the mosses on the stone that "all together they give those full-blown tints which add the richest finishing to a ruin." Elsewhere Gilpin insisted that "it is time alone, which meliorates the ruin; which gives it perfect beauty; and brings it ... to a state of nature." Ruins thus became an object of aesthetic delectation in their own right, with time no longer pictured as the hand of devastation or decay, but rather as the hand of the artist.

By the close of the eighteenth century, the aesthetic mode of vision—and the frivolity, the falseness, and the pretense that all too often accompanied it—became a favorite satirical target in poems, popular dialogues, plays, and novels. And by the middle of the nineteenth century, a new and increasingly naturalist tone began to color the impressions of travel writers of widely varying temperament. In chapters on Rome in Dickens's *Pictures from Italy* (1846), Howells's *Italian Journeys* (1867), and Taine's *Italy: Rome and Naples* (1869), one more often reads of dark, narrow streets, cramped quarters, dung-heaps, rubbish, filth, squalor, bad odors—a place "tarnished, faded, full of holes, and infested with human vermin," as Taine put it—than of the grandeur that was eternal Rome. Even the intermingling of past and present that had previously stirred so many wistful meditations was now more likely to be experienced as bizarre, even repellent. Dickens was taken aback not only by the way "every fragment ... has been blended into some modern structure ... with which it cannot otherwise than lamely assort," but also by the way "ruins of the old mythology ... fragments of obsolete legend and observance, have been incorporated into the worship of Christian altars here; and how ... the false faith and the true are fused into a monstrous union." For Howells, the sudden appearance of shards from another world brought only "a keen sense of disappointment." No matter how much he longed for "some affectionate solicitude on the part of Nature to redeem these works of Art from the destruction that had befallen them," when faced with what remained of the Forum, he could see only a "dirty cowfield," "incoherent columns overthrown and mixed with dilapidated walls—mere phonographic consonants, dumbly representing the past, out of which all vocal glory had departed."

These intensely modern writers were overwhelmed by the stark reality of modern—superstitious, backward, papal—Rome. What is more—and this was entirely new in the long history of ruin-gazing—they were overwhelmed by the stark reality of ancient—corrupt, bloodthirsty, imperial—Rome. The classical humanist tradition where men of taste and letters knew ancient history, geography, rhetoric, oratory, poetry, sculpture, and architecture with as much, if not more, intimacy as they knew the things of their own time was giving way to a modern historical sense with progress at its core. By these lights, the ancients were no longer exemplars to be imitated and excelled, but rather, in Taine's words, "despots and devastators." And so when Taine came before the Colosseum, its silent masses of broken, crumbling stone, overgrown with green, conjured an entirely different experience from that of earlier travelers: "There is a sudden revulsion, a veritable shock; it is grand—nothing grander could be imagined."

> This, then, you say to yourself, was a circus; on these graded seats sat a hundred and seven thousand spectators, yelling, applauding, threatening simultaneously; five thousand animals were slain, and ten thousand combatants contended in this arena. You gather from this some idea of Roman life. All this provokes hatred of the Romans.

As Taine's revulsion makes clear, an acute awareness of history could have the effect of blocking aesthetic feeling. But this new historical awareness did not so much destroy the love of ruins as give rise to a new kind of picturesque travel literature. In Henry James's collection of occasional travel pieces entitled *Italian Hours* (1909), the famed ruins of antiquity—the Colosseum, the Forum, and the Capitol—are mentioned once and only in passing. The countryside just outside of Rome, by contrast, merited an entire chapter. And this is because, as James wrote in 1873, a ride on horseback in the Campagna was "the most romantic of all our possibilities," for it furnished "an inordinate scope for the reflective—by which I mean after all the aesthetic and the 'esoteric'—life." It is characteristic of the new picturesque writing that James's painterly eye fell not on a celebrated monument of antiquity with all its troubling historical associations, but rather on what was essentially a neutral object, a Roman wall in springtime:

> Crumbling grain by grain, colored and mottled to a hundred tones by sun and storm, with its rugged structure of brick extruding through its coarse complexion of peeling stucco, its creeping lacework of wandering ivy starred with miniature violets, and its wild fringe of stouter flowers against the sky—it is as little as possible a blank partition; it is practically a luxury of landscape.

It is hard to find a picturesque traveler before James who envisioned the world so completely filtered through painting. Surely no one before him was as excruciatingly aware of what he was doing. In a vignette of a "very picturesque old city on a mountain-top," James describes his joy at coming upon a young man who is singing: "The spectacle, generally, was operatic, and as his vocal flourishes reached my ear I said to myself that in Italy accident was always romantic and that such a figure had been exactly what was wanted to set off the landscape." After a chance conversation with the man, however, James realizes that the habit of aestheticizing the world has blinded him to the truth before him: "He was an unhappy, underfed, unemployed young man, who took a hard, grim view of everything." Which led to the inescapable conclusion: "This made it very absurd of me to have looked at him simply as a graceful ornament to the prospect, an harmonious little figure in the middle distance." And he was quick to imagine himself from the Italians' perspective, who "would be sure to exclaim upon the impudence of the fancy-picture."

All these misgivings come together in a scene much favored by latter-day writers on ruins, where James, returning from a ride in the Campagna at twilight, expresses ambivalence about the "strange and intense suggestiveness" of "moulder-ing villas": "To delight in the aspects of *sentient* ruin might appear a heartless pastime, and the pleasure, I confess, shows the note of perversity." This perversity is nothing other than James's disconcerting awareness that the very refinement of his reflective life marks the distance that he feels from the continuity of lived experience. In this, he is one in a long line of painfully sensitive souls who yearn for the immediacy of lived experience—a type that would become a

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The Golan Heights

To Whom Do They Belong? Can Israel Survive Without Them?

In a transparent effort to improve his thuggish image, Syria's president Bashar Assad has proposed to meet with Israeli government officials to discuss the possibility of peace. There can be no question that "peace" is not on Mr. Assad's mind, but rather the recovery of the Golan Heights, from which Syria has launched three major wars against Israel.

What are the facts?

Historical Background—The Golan was always part of the Jewish homeland. The Syrian claim to the Golan is tenuous. Syria, as a political entity, did not exist at all until after the first World War. Until then it was just another province in the Ottoman empire, with ill-defined borders. In 1923, in an Anglo/French great power play, the border between Syria and Israel was established. The Golan Heights were ceded to Syria. Even before the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Syrians, having heavily fortified the area, subjected the villages in northern Israel to almost daily shellings, making normal life impossible. In the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria attacked Israel and was defeated. Israel occupied the Golan Heights and in 1981, for all practical purposes, annexed them.

Syria and its President—Syria is the most destabilizing influence in the Middle East. It is classified by the U.S. State Department as a narcotic-dealing and terrorist state. Its main fury is directed against Israel, which is perceived as a bulwark of Western influence and civilization, both of which Syria abhors and totally rejects.

Syria's former president, Hafez Assad, was a tyrant, every bit as ruthless and as cunning as his unlamented Iraqi counterpart Saddam Hussein. His son, the current president, is equally despotic, though not quite as smart as his father. Syria is a world center for terrorism. It still harbors Nazi bigwigs, who found welcome there after the World War. Few doubt that Hafez Assad was the mastermind behind the attack on the US Marines barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans were killed. The Syrian government oversees one of the largest narcotics and counterfeiting operations in the world.

Military Security—The Golan is a small plateau of about 400 square miles. If it were a part of Syria it would be less than 1% of its territory. But it is of supreme strategic importance to Israel. Its high ground provides early-warning capability, without which Israel—just as in 1948, in 1967, and in 1973—would be subject to surprise attack by the Syrians. Its loss would obligate Israel to stay on constant alert and to maintain a state of readiness and mobilization that would be economically and socially untenable. The Golan, which ranges up to a height of 2300 ft., dominates the Jordan Valley, the lowest point on earth, about 700 ft. below sea level. On the Golan itself, there are only two natural terrain bottlenecks through which tanks can advance. Those choke points are defensible and made possible the repulse of 1400 Syrian tanks that attacked Israel in the 1973 war. But with the Golan in Syrian hands, and without the radar installations that would give Israel warning of any military movements, thousands of tanks—backed up by missiles and airplanes—could overrun Israel in a matter of hours. It would be a strategically impossible situation, especially for a country as small as Israel—smaller than Lake Michigan, smaller by half than San Bernardino County in California. The Golan does not make for perfect defense, but it gives Israel a small, vitally important breathing space for mobilization.

> "With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arab armies could be confident of defeat, and peace would be preserved. To hand back the Golan to Syria at this time would be a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction."

The Golan is the source of over one-third of Israel's fresh water. In 1964, with the Golan in Syrian hands, Syria attempted to divert these headwaters and to cripple Israel's water supply. It is more than likely that, given another opportunity, Syria would once again attempt to destroy Israel's water supply.

Syria has attacked Israel three times across the Golan. Given its implacable hostility, no responsible Israeli leader could possibly return the Golan to Syria. If it were to give up the high ground of the Golan and return to the "death trap" borders of 1967 or anything close to it, Israel, in order to survive, would have to rely on the good will of the Arab states, whose main policy objective is the destruction of Israel. Even though peace-for-peace would be the best solution, how about this: In order to assuage Arab pride, consider granting formal ownership of the Golan to Syria and having Israel—given the precedents of Guantánamo and Hong Kong—lease it back for a hundred-year period. An aggressor will attack only if confident of victory. With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arab armies could be confident of defeat, and peace would be preserved. To hand back the Golan to Syria at this time would be a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction.

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familiar presence in modern literature. In "Travelling Companions" (1870), a story James wrote at the time he was composing his travel sketches, the leading character laments to his companion:

> What a real pity we are not Catholics; that that dazzling monument is not something more to us than a mere splendid show! What a different thing this visiting of churches would be for us, if we occasionally felt the prompting to fall on our knees. I begin to grow ashamed of this perpetual attitude of bald curiosity.

In his revulsion at his own detachment, James's character (and perhaps the young James, too) failed to grasp the necessary condition of the aesthetic life: it is precisely detachment that allows one to view things artistically.

FOR ALL OF JAMES'S APPREHENsion about the pitfalls of the aesthetic life, he also knew that experience heightened by art enlarged one's consciousness by allowing one literally to occupy the standpoints of others in imagination. This is precisely what his own vivid word-pictures of his rides in the Campagna accomplished. In a particularly luminous description of one such outing, he made the reader long to gaze upon Soracte Mountain, which "rises from its blue horizon like an island from the sea and with an elegance of contour which no mood of the year can deepen or diminish." James, who at this point seems to be speaking as much to himself as to the reader, could not help but note, "You know it well, you have seen it often in the mellow backgrounds of Claude." For the connoisseur of the picturesque sensibility, painting, vision, and experience, as well as the pleasures of remembering the scene and re-creating it for others, are so completely entangled that "you begin to take your saddle for a faded old arm-chair in a palace gallery."

Happily, Rome is so arranged that someone like James can conveniently see Claudes at a nearby palace gallery. When he speaks of "their delightful air of reference to something that had become a part of my personal experience," the reader experiences in all its freshness what has now become a stale, even maligned, notion—that art can transcend its time and place. And when he mentions the further delight of feeling "the common element in one's own sensibility and those of a genius whom that element has helped to do great things," the reader feels in all its intensity the long-forgotten power of art to free the self from the suffocating confines of its own subjectivity. For James, "the unbroken continuity of impressions" that he has been describing represents "an excellent example of the intellectual background of all enjoyment in Rome." His observation that it "effectually prevents pleasure from becoming vulgar, for your sensation rarely begins and ends with itself" makes clear how the aesthetic perspective creates a distinct texture to sensation: "it reverberates—it recalls, commemorates, resuscitates something else."

The reflective life, then, always holds out the possibility of leading to something larger than the self and its meager preoccupations. Over two hundred years after Claude first painted these scenes, James was still seeing and enjoying what Claude had seen and enjoyed, and by writing these beautiful passages, he made it possible for its pleasures to reverberate with both his contemporary readers and future ones. But the thread that links one generation to another through shared aesthetic experience is made of delicate material, and as time has worn on it has grown ever thinner. The passages in James that would have most delighted his contemporaries are the ones that modern-day readers—accustomed to instant-camera images—are most likely to skim over, or if they have the patience to read them, find excessive. And the same fate has been visited upon much of eighteenth-century picturesque painting, poetry, and gardens as well as upon the picturesque view of ruins. This is not just because few people still see natural scenes with a painterly eye or appreciate ruins as masterpieces of time. Of equal consequence, the most celebrated ruins of antiquity literally ceased being picturesque well over a hundred years ago when, as in the case of the Colosseum, the grass, wildflowers, ivy, and fruit trees were removed in the name of modern, scientific archaeology, and picturesque guidebooks began speaking of the Colosseum, along with other famed ruins, as if beloved works of art had been vandalized.

CHRISTOPHER WOODWARD'S book belongs in this tradition. His starting point is the image of the Colosseum pathetically reduced from its former botanical glory to a "bald, dead, and bare circle of stones" and it is his project to "show what a source of inspiration ruins have been in earlier centuries" and to "remind [readers] of their own enjoyment of ruins." These are essentially aesthetic motives, and so Woodward has written a book of sensibility, moving back and forth between travel guide, anecdote, personal impressions, autobiography, and art, architectural, and literary history. Rose Macaulay's celebrated *Pleasure of Ruins* (1953), along with Elizabeth Wheeler Manwaring's *Italian Landscape in Eighteenth-Century England* (1925), Christopher Hussey's *The Picturesque* (1927), and more recently William L. Vance's *America's Rome* (1989), set the standard for evoking earlier appreciations of ruins. Woodward wants to do more than simply re-hash quotations from them, although many of the best ones rightly find a place in his book. Surprisingly, none of these books appear in his sketchy bibliographical notes.

Woodward has labored hard to find wonderful new observations from travelers, writers, and artists, for which anyone who cares about ruins must be grateful, even if these additions do little to revise the well-established picture of the experience of ruins in the melancholy or picturesque keys. The same is true of his informative chapters on the familiar themes of human frailty and mortality, the fate of empires, ruins seen through the eyes of artists and writers, the picturesque sensibility, and the craze for artificial ruins. In each, Woodward strings together a number of well-chosen anecdotes and quotations for the reader's delectation, but he acts more as a genial guide to popular destinations than as an interpreter of foreign lands or an explorer of virgin territory. His enthusiasm for ruins has left him strangely incurious about his subject.

Woodward's reader quickly learns not to expect a well-developed argument or a sustained historical account, but on too many occasions Woodward simply looks away. Of James's complicated feelings about the aesthetic of ruins, he writes "James seems to have glimpsed an understanding of the 'perversity' by which we find a pleasure in contemplating decay. Frustratingly, however—frustratingly for us, that is—he kicks his heels and rides away without pausing to explain." This is more true of Woodward himself. Languor sets the tone of much of this idiosyncratic, meandering book, which is not surprising, since in Woodward's view lan-

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guor is central to the experience of ruins. More than once he speaks of the "soporific spell of decay," the "lofty, even ecstatic, drowsiness" produced by ruin-gazing. And so his book must stand or fall as a book of sensibility, a very belated (and somewhat bathetic) installment of the genre that reached its height with picturesque travel guides.

In Ruins is a good introduction to its wonderful subject. Still, Woodward might then have thought more carefully and critically about a familiar claim in the literature which he repeats throughout the book: that he "cannot find a single writer or painter who has been inspired by the Colosseum since 1870," when archaeologists began cleaning it. Woodward gives the impression that scientific archaeology singlehandedly ended the long-standing appreciation of ruins and the works of art they inspired. But this is at best a partial explanation, for it ignores the enormous change in sensibility that also took place during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Its most striking manifestation can be seen in the important paintings and poems of the time, work that was defiantly modern. For a modernist sensibility seeking tragedy, sublimity, or transcendence, the delights of the picturesque came to seem paltry, even trivial, just as melancholy meditations came to feel hopelessly outdated to an avant-garde dedicated to the new and the shocking. What could ruins, even luxuriantly overgrown ones, possibly offer to a world infatuated with progress? An important consequence of the cult of progress is the change in feeling toward "pleasing decay," a phrase coined in 1948 by the English artist John Piper. Where pleasing decay was for centuries admired by cultivated people as the ultimate picturesque experience, Piper could complain that it had come to be regarded as "criminal neglect." And in our present clean, deodorized, hygienic, youth-obsessed age, pleasing decay is understood at best as an oxymoron, if it is understood at all.

WOODWARD'S LOVE OF ruins has blinded him to the critical reasons for their eclipse in the popular imagination, but it has also made him insensitive to the tensions within the aesthetic of ruins itself. It is one thing to enjoy ruins that have been leisurely sculpted by time, but quite another to take pleasure in ones made by disaster, especially recent disaster. Woodward completed his book before September 11, so he could not discuss the World Trade Center, but he does have a good chapter on ruins brought about by twentieth-century wars. He identifies three typical responses: rebuild to create a facsimile of the original edifice; replace the remains with something entirely new; preserve the ruined site as a whole in perpetuity. He points out that in the case of the destruction caused by the German blitz during World War II, the British War Artists Advisory Committee devised a novel proposal: some bombed churches would be preserved in ruins as war memorials, but ruins that would be given over to nature to transform over time.

Woodward regrets that the proposal was ultimately rejected, but he is glad that the group did succeed in appointing artists to paint bombed buildings, often at the very moment of their destruction, and he believes that the "strange beauty" that the Committee hoped to preserve was captured by artists such as John Piper. Woodward's appreciation of ruins is such that he is able to take pleasure in their formal qualities quite apart from the terrible violence that created them. In this, he lacks the self-consciousness, the sense of irony, displayed by Henry James when he caught himself in what he called the "very absurd" act of turning actual people into harmonious figures in a landscape. And so Woodward is in sympathy with Kenneth Clark's astounding declaration at the height of the Blitz that "bomb damage is in itself Picturesque," just as he has no reservations about Piper's equally astounding belief that "bomb damage has revealed new beauties in unexpected appositions." For Woodward, ruins caused by bomb damage have ultimately inspired the best of postmodern architecture: "[Piper's] words conjure up an architecture of transparency, of fractured colliding perspectives, but it was not until the 1990s that architects such as Frank Gehry and Daniel Libeskind showed that architecture could achieve such excitement of form."

Woodward's admiration for the bomb aesthetic of postmodern architecture has taken on an eerie prophetic note now that Daniel Libeskind's design for a building composed of fractured colliding perspectives has been chosen to fill the empty space previously occupied by the World Trade Center towers. But even more to the point is the reaction of certain prominent journalist-aesthetes to the actual mouldering ruins at Ground Zero. There was something "grotesque," as Leon Wieseltier noted in these pages a few months after September 11, about *The New York Times*' critic Herbert Muschamp's enthusiasm for the alleged "resemblance between the wreckage at ground zero and some Frank Gehry projects" and his insistence that "Gehry's architecture ... has constructed an aesthetic context" for the site. Mesmerized—better yet, numbed—by the sophistication of their own sensibility, some people literally could not see the terrible reality before their eyes.

The enormous popularity of photographs of Ground Zero suggests that many people were able to appreciate the striking visual qualities of the awful devastation, at least when it was framed and edited by the lens of a camera, the viewfinder being the modern-day equivalent of the picturesque. Indeed, the most arresting pictures—one need only think of the hauntingly beautiful images of New York City firemen encased, like sculpture, in white dust—made those of us who admired them heartlessly forget what we were looking at. Apparently, the habit of taking pleasure in visual composition alone is now so deeply ingrained that not only aesthetes but even ordinary people are capable of seeing beauty unproblematically in places where it has no right, morally speaking, to exist. ■

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PARIS DIARIST

Revenged

On my flight to Paris, I read another in the series of gifts provided by the publisher W.W. Norton to that small but growing and intensely loyal fellowship of readers of Joseph Roth, a novelist and essayist who wrote in German and died 65 years ago, just before the war he had seen coming. There aren't more than a handful of writers I've read who pack such nuance into nearly every one of their graceful sentences. (The elegance of Roth's English prose is a credit to his translator, Michael Hofmann.) And Roth confirms the old truth that the best correspondents from a country are usually not professional journalists, but simply great writers.

In *Report from a Parisian Paradise: Essays from France 1925–1939*, Roth asserts in his essay "Europe Is Possible Only Without the Third Reich" that "a Europe including such a Germany is a nonsense." Of course, he was correct. Which brings me to the different, but nonetheless troubling, question many Frenchmen are beginning to ask themselves, though still *sotto voce*: Is France possible with the steep and continuing proportional increase in its Muslim population?

This influx is partly the (maybe justified) revenge of colonialism on the colonials. Perhaps plagued by their bad consciences, the metropolitan powers conferred immigration and citizenship rights onto many of those over whom they had ruled. In his searing book, *A Savage War for Peace*, Alistair Horne posed the choice faced by the *pieds noirs*: "the suitcase or the coffin." Yet many native Algerians, having fought bitterly to get rid of the French, came as well. Algeria, once considered a potential jewel in the "nonaligned" (though very much "aligned") movement's crown, has been a disaster—its economy in ruins, its politics a choice between murderous Islamist fanaticism and military tyranny. And so they have kept coming.

And, sad to say, the immigrants have brought some of the forces that have devastated Algeria to French shores. If you walk during daylight in, say, the Saint-Denis neighborhood of Paris, the streets are full of unhappy looking, unemployed, youngish Arab men. (Arab immigrants are far less likely to work than the native French.) Lacking jobs, they rely on the still abundant social security payment schemes that are helping bankrupt the French public treasury. Like other Western countries, France has a relatively low net birthrate—which, without Arabs, would likely be a negative birthrate. (This is not a new phenomenon: Roth observed in 1927 that France seems to see "positively its duty to be underpopulated and forever to stand in need of new inhabitants.") But, unlike the Asian and sub-Saharan African immigrants from the old empire—who, like the Algerians, are treated miserably in classic racist style—the Arab new arrivals do not replace the dying population economically. In truth, they are an economic drain.

Those who have fed themselves on *gauche caviar* believe one dare not publicly utter such thoughts. But, late into the night and after much good wine, some of them confide their usually suppressed anxieties. They are frightened of the tides of Muslim immigrants and what they portend for the French future. Almost every Frenchman I spoke with—and almost all my friends are still people of the left—have fastened on the banning of the headscarf as a guarantor of the laicism, which is to say the secularism, of Republican France. Which helps explain why they are frankly indifferent to the prohibition's clear violation of the freedom of religion, as it would be seen in virtually any court in the United States.

If anything, the fact that thinking Americans are appalled by the headscarf decision only increases its prestige in France. Although liberals may not always admit it, French anti-Americanism long predates the presidency of George W. Bush. Anti-Americanism used to correlate with support for France's once-strong (and Stalinist) Communist Party. (Many who used to vote Communist now vote for Jean-Marie Le Pen.) But it had broader roots as well. After all, Charles de Gaulle himself built a politics of French grandeur (and the force de frappe) around resentment of the United States. For Dominique de Villepin today, anti-Americanism is a political concession to the Arabs of France and a diplomatic concession to the Arab world. For others, especially the elites, anti-Americanism expresses the hyperventilated but essentially simple dudgeon of the French that Paris is no longer paradise. No longer the "capital of the world," as Roth described it when he arrived in 1925.

Elites also indulge the fantasy—ever harder to maintain—that France is more tolerant of, and more at peace with, its racial minorities than the United States. In the chic little bookstore on the chic little street where my chic little hotel stands, there were three serial volumes of a hardcover comic titled *AmeriKKKa* in the window. Every once in a while, someone here will tell you that Josephine Baker and James Baldwin were refugees from U.S. racism. The irony is not subtle: This is an increasingly bigoted country accusing another of the same offense.

Just ask France's Jews. Pierre Birnbaum has written a book called *The Anti-Semitic Moment* (Hill & Wang) about the Dreyfus affair and the mood in 1898. We are living through another anti-Semitic moment today, but this one is provoked not by the Church or the army or the old royalists. The Jew-hatred on France's streets today—which has frequently culminated in violence in recent months—is a consequence of widespread Muslim teachings about the Jews, in their media, by their imams, and in their interpretation of their holy texts. Barbara Amiel has reported in the *The Daily Telegraph* that as much as 20 to 30 percent of France's population under 25 is now Muslim. And, with current birth rates, the porous frontiers within the European Union, and the continuous migration from the failed states of the Middle East, the Muslim population will continue to grow. (In France it is currently 10 percent.)

I asked a Parisian friend a bit cheekily whether in 50 years the muezzin would summon the faithful to prayer from the towers of Notre Dame. "No," he said, rather irked by my query, "not in a half century. ... But, in a hundred years, yes, maybe yes." **MARTIN PERETZ**

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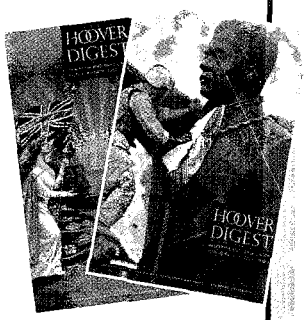

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It's great news that most Americans now identify themselves as environmentalists. Unfortunately, a small number have embraced environmentalism with a religious fervor, basing their beliefs more on faith and dogma than on data and science.

The agenda of these radical environmentalists has less to do with protecting the environment and more to do with an antipathy toward business, profits, and certain technologies. Ironically, their efforts to achieve their own narrow vision of what constitutes a "good society" are often inimical to protecting the environment.

For example, exploiting a technicality that links the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to pesticide registration, **environmental groups have filed a spate of nuisance lawsuits that attempt to prevent the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from registering or reregistering pesticides**. The environmental groups allege that, by failing to consult with the agencies that administer the ESA—the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service—before registering a pesticide, the EPA has not complied fully with the law, despite the fact that the Fish and Wildlife Service's *Endangered Species Act Consultation Handbook* makes it clear it does not have the authority to "force an action agency to consult." Even the custodians of the ESA do not feel that they have the power to compel consultations, despite current regulations seeming to require such an exchange.

These suits are not substantive but procedural; no actual damage to threatened or endangered species from the EPA's actions has been demonstrated. And never mind that pesticides control vermin, increase agricultural productivity, reduce the need to convert wild lands into farmland, prevent the growth of harmful fungi and bacteria on crops, reduce prices to consumers, and undergo exhaustive testing and regulatory review to ensure their safety.

Although the ESA requires all federal agencies to take into account possible adverse effects on endangered species, Congress recognized the value of pesticides by directing that pesticide registration by the EPA (under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act) should "minimize the impacts to persons engaged in agricultural food and fiber commodity production and other affected pesticide users and applicators."

The various government agencies involved have recently devised a solution to the procedural problem: Because the EPA boasts vast and comprehensive experience in assessing the potential risks of pesticides to plant and animal species—including those listed as endangered under the ESA—the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service have proposed a rule that will eliminate the requirement for the EPA to consult with other agencies on pesticide registration. This technical revision will not only assure greater consistency in the assessment of pesticides but, by freeing regulators to more expeditiously license environmentally friendly products, will also better protect endangered species and their habitats. And, of course, it will render the lawsuits moot.

This change will not fix other existing flaws in the ESA, but it will at least prevent this legislation from enabling activists to interfere with the development and registration of an essential class of agricultural and consumer products.

—Henry I. Miller, M.D.

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